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Ezekiel Hopkins. D.D.
Bishops of Derry.

THE

WORKS

OF

EZEKIEL HOPKINS, D.D.,

SUCCESSIVELY BISHOP OF RAPHOE AND DERRY.

Third American.

FROM PRATT'S LONDON EDITION.

EDITED BY REV. CHARLES W. QUICK.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR, AND EXPOSITIONS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER AND THE DECALOGUE.

GRACE BE WITH ALL THEM THAT LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN SINCERITY. — *Ephes.* vi. 24.

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GENERAL CONTENTS OF THE THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

Account of the present Edition.—Biographical Sketch of Bishop Hopkins.—The Vanity of the World.—A practical Exposition of the Lord's Prayer.—A Catechism on the Lord's Prayer.—A practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments.—Discourses on the Law.—Discourses concerning Sin.

VOLUME II.

Discourses concerning Sin, continued.—The Doctrine of the Two Covenants.—A Treatise on Regeneration, or the New Birth.—The Doctrine of the Two Sacraments.—The All-sufficiency of Christ to save and intercede for Sinners.—The Excellence of Heavenly Treasures.—Practical Christianity in working out our own Salvation.—The Assurance of Salvation a strong motive to serve God.—On Glorifying God in his Attributes.

VOLUME III.

A Treatise on Hypocrisy.—A Treatise on Conscience.—A Discourse on the Duty of Mortification.—Death Disarmed of its Sting.—Miscellaneous Sermons.—Index of Texts of Scripture.—Index of Subjects.

ACCOUNT OF THE PRESENT EDITION.

THIS first American edition of Bishop Ezekiel Hopkins' Works is a reprint of Pratt's London edition of 1809. The only abridgment is the omission of two discourses, found among the "Miscellaneous Sermons" in the fourth volume. They are entitled "On Submission to Rulers," and "Against Rebellion." They contain references to the constitution and laws of England, and maintain political views considered inapplicable to the circumstances of this country. Entire omission was judged preferable to the publication of them expurgated of local references, particularly, because said local and historical references far exceed the matter which would interest the general reader.

Dedicatory Epistles, Introductions, Prefatory matter relating to the descendants of Bishop Hopkins, and Editorial notices addressed to the critical and inquisitive reader, have been omitted also.

The Editor has embraced the opportunity furnished by a republication of the best edition of the Author's works, to make some amendments and improvements in a direction pointed out by Mr. Pratt, and in which he proceeded to some extent. The work had reached the middle of the second volume before it came into our hands. Hence, all the changes adopted could not be made in that part of the publication.

The typography has been changed, and the page made more pleasing by the curtailment of the use of Italics.

Scripture quotations have been restored to exact agreement with the standard text, and their quotation indicated in the usual way.

The orthography of some words has been made to conform to the changes which have taken place in modern times, and the

great American lexicographer has been taken as the standard authority.

Many obsolete words have been removed, and modern words and expressions have been substituted.

Many grammatical defects, with which old English abounds, have been remedied, and repetitions in the statements of subjects discussed have been avoided.

By these changes, neither affecting the substance of doctrine, nor the integrity of the Author's works, it is hoped that an addition has been made to the theological literature of the times, more pleasing and useful than an exact reprint could have afforded.

The Index of Texts has been revised and enlarged so as to contain all the passages quoted or referred to in any way by the Author. The Index of Subjects has been freed from redundant matter, and is more convenient than any other published in former editions.

The following notation of Mr. Pratt will be useful to the reader in obtaining a perfect comprehension of the author's plan, and will assist the memory.

"The principal divisions are printed in full capitals, and are marked with the full Roman numerals: thus I., II., &c.

"The secondary heads are printed in small Roman capitals, with small Roman numerals: thus i., ii., &c.

"The third subdivisions are printed in Italics, with the common Arabic numerals: thus 1, 2, &c.

"The remainder have no distinction in the type, except occasionally that the chief words begin with a capital letter: but the notation is as follows:

"Subdivisions of the Fourth Order thus: (1), (2), &c. Fifth, [1], [2], &c. Sixth, 1st., 2dly, &c. Seventh, (1st.), (2dly), &c. Eighth, [1st.], [2dly], &c. Ninth, (a), (b), &c. Such divisions as could not be brought under any regular head are printed thus: FIRST, &c., or First, &c., or *First*, &c."

C. W. Q.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR.

The Rt. Rev. Ezekiel Hopkins was born at Sanford, in Devonshire, England, A. D., 1633. His father, who was a minister of the Chapel of Ease attached to the parish of Crediton, during many years, gave personal attention to the education of his son. Under such favorable circumstances his natural powers were rapidly developed, and he was able to enter the University of Oxford at the early age of sixteen years. He took his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in course, the latter having been received, June 5th, 1656. All the honors of the University, which were confessedly merited by his scholarship, were not conferred upon him, owing to the fact that his residence made him ineligible. Though he could not be elected Fellow, yet the College to which he was attached secured his prolonged residence at Oxford, by choosing him for its Chaplain. This position he filled with acceptance and success during four years. In 1660 he went to London, and became assistant to Dr. William Spurstow, minister of Hackney, near the city. In 1662, when the act of Uniformity was passed, requiring all ministers to conform to the liturgical usages then established by law, Dr. Spurstow resigned his charge, and thereby his assistant was also displaced. Though, as Wood declares, Hopkins was "educated and lived in strict Presbyterian and Independent discipline," yet he does not seem to have adhered to its principles in a partisan spirit, and thus to have created strong prejudice against him in the minds of Episcopalians. For upon leaving Hackney, many of the parishioners of St. Matthews Church, London, tried to have him chosen for their rector. In this, however, they were unsuccessful, the Rev. Henry Hurst, of the same University, and a rival candidate, having obtained a majority of votes. The events of the next five years

are involved in obscurity, and the biographers of this eminent man of God have maintained earnest controversies in regard to them. Some authorities say he was called to be rector of All Hallows Church; others contend it was St. Edmunds which gave him the invitation. Which he served, and whether he officiated in either parish, are still matters of dispute. On the one hand it is stated that his Bishop refused to institute him in the parish to which he was called, on the ground that "he was a popular preacher among the fanatics." Opposed to this we are presented with the records of the Vestry of one parish which give an account of his ministry among them. But even here, the loose manner in which the minutes were kept renders it uncertain whether he was maintained as Rector or Lecturer. One thing, however, is rendered certain by these facts of history. He was regarded by all classes as a good preacher. Men of opposite views and principles in regard to political and ecclesiastical government, listened with delight to his instructive and eloquent declaration of the whole counsel of God. His fame and popularity increased steadily. They were founded upon a solid and enduring basis, and rose to a height and proportion befitting the eminence and worth of one whom the Lord had so distinguished with gifts and graces.

It was during his abode in the great city that he married a niece of Sir Robert Viner, who at one period was Mayor of London. But not many years elapsed before the conjugal tie was severed by death, and both himself and his children were led to mourn their sad and untimely bereavement. This sudden change of circumstances, this abrupt termination put to the tale of life, the recital of which within the domestic circle was heard with so much enjoyment, is a striking illustration of the solemn truths set forth in the discourse on "the Vanity of the World." That treatise was dedicated to his wife's uncle, and bears the date of February 1st, 1668. It gives evidence of a depth and earnestness of feeling which could only arise from full and varied experience of "the changes and chances of this mortal life." The reader perceives that the lessons in the schools of affliction had been well

learned, and had wrought in his mind a conviction of the source of all true and abiding joys.

The cause of his removal to Exeter, in 1667, is not stated by any of his biographers. An intimate friend, the Rev. John Prince, says he would have liked a place in the Cathedral Church, in his native diocese, and all felt that his desire for preferment there was not beyond that which his merits should lead him to entertain and cherish. But Providence had assigned to him a distant field of labor, and had appointed for him greater honors and usefulness than those to which he aspired. His residence in Exeter was the means leading to the destined end. Among the occasional hearers whom his renown for preaching attracted to his church, (St. Mary Arches, of which he was Rector,) was a nobleman of wealth and distinction. Lord Roberts, afterwards Earl of Radnor, was greatly edified by his instructions, and upon receiving the appointment to the Lieutenancy of Ireland, he invited Hopkins to accompany him as Chaplain to his family. The offer was accepted, and proved to be an important step in his career of greatness in the Church of Christ. His promotion was rapid, and attended with gratifying proofs of the personal attachment of his noble patron. By his learning and abilities, as well as by moral worth, piety, and refinement, he completely ingratiated himself in the Earl's favor, and there was no honor which was thought too distinguished for this gracious servant of Christ. He elevated him to the Deanery of Raphoe, in 1669, and about the same time gave him his daughter in marriage.

The party which placed Lord Roberts in power removed him in 1670, and he returned to England, and during the rest of his life abstained from taking any active part in politics.

Dean Hopkins remained in his Cathedral in Raphoe, and by the recommendation of Lord Roberts, and his successor Lord Berkley, he was raised to the Bishopric of the diocese, in 1671. Bishop Hopkins was now thirty-eight years of age, but not in the enjoyment of vigorous health. He devoted himself with characteristic energy to the cultivation of the enlarged field of usefulness of which he had been appointed overseer. It is recorded of him

that he did not absent himself from his diocese save when his necessary attendance in the House of Lords, and visits to his friends in England, for the purpose of recruiting his strength, obliged him to leave Ireland. His unremitted attention to preaching placed him in strong contrast with many chief pastors of his time. The troublous times were calculated to draw aside the rulers in the Church, and caused many of them to be absorbed in state affairs, connected with the changes occurring in its polity and discipline. Bishop Hopkins, however, was enabled to resist the strong current of circumstances, and followed the dictates of a sanctified heart. He felt that preaching was one of the most important of his ministerial duties, and that like his inspired predecessor, Christ sent him "not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." His diligence and carefulness show that he acted under the constraining power of the love of Christ, and realized the solemnity of the Apostle's feeling, when he exclaimed, "woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

In the year 1681, when the Duke of Ormond was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Bishop Hopkins was transferred to Londonderry. The appointment to that large and important diocese was acceptable to both clergy and laity, and the welcome from all classes which greeted him augured well for his success and usefulness. He came to the church in that diocese "in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." In that large city, where religion was at a low ebb, and where vice was shameless, he preached such discourses as those with which our second volume commences. There he protested against the looseness and lawlessness of the great by his sermons on "Practical Christianity," and "The Almost Christian Discovered." There he pointed out to magistrates the inconsistency of not ruling themselves according to God's word, and urged upon the people, restive under restraint, the duty of submission to rulers. There he convincingly and emphatically maintained that the regeneration and sanctification of the heart were the only causes which would ensure uprightness and obedience here, and lead to happiness hereafter. When at the close of seven years ministry among them he was compelled to

flee from threatened persecution, he could confidently say, "be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

In 1688 he saw the increase and progress of the Roman Catholic army, and fled with many of his flock to a safe retreat, until the calamity of revolution was overpast. The political troubles and unsettled state of Ireland continued longer than was anticipated, and the Bishop despaired of a speedy return to his field of labor. Therefore he accepted the charge of a small parish in London, and there endeavored to find that satisfaction in his work which could not be found elsewhere. For he mourned over wayward sons, as well as lamented the strife and rebellion in the subjects of the king. One of his children was in the army which threatened the liberties and the religion of Ireland, and the other gave no evidence that he followed the example or heeded the instructions of a gracious and godly father. These sorrows weighed him down, and he gradually sunk under them. His soul bore them with Christian fortitude, and he glorified his covenant God even in the fire of suffering and affliction. But the body succumbed to the stroke, and his health and strength failed. He only lived nine months after he took charge of the parish in London, and then was taken to that rest that remaineth for the people of God, and to the enjoyment of that reward which belongs to those who turn many to righteousness. Death did not overtake him while flying from his arrest, but found him longing for his coming. To him that last enemy was disarmed of his sting, and appeared only as the servant Jesus sends to call his followers to his presence and fruition. One of his intimate friends says he lived in expectation of his change, and earnestly prayed that God would take him. His was the true waiting posture, setting his house in order, addressing himself to all the duties of an adopted child of God, and waiting for the coming of the Lord. Self-examination, repentance and prayer, mortification of the flesh, and labors of love engrossed his attention and fully occupied his time. His mind was stayed on God, and filled with that peace which passeth understanding. Heaven came down to meet his soul, and the earnest of eternal blessedness was enjoyed before he passed

within the gates of the New Jerusalem. No extatic raptures accompanied his departure; but he peacefully entered into rest, enjoying the calmness and satisfaction which are only exceeded by the open vision of Christ.

"So gently shuts the eye of day,
So dies the wave along the shore."

His works do follow him. Labors of love, the care of the churches, the gospel fully preached in the great centers of civilization and learning, parental admonitions and godly example all follow him to the judgment seat of Christ, and receive the reward which free and sovereign grace has assigned them. And when we read the testimonies of those who were called, built up, and "made partakers of *the* benefit" through his instrumentality,—when we perceive that he "being dead yet speaketh," and through his writings still leads men to Christ, and confirms them in attachment to his person and cause,—when we know that his glowing words are committed to imperishable record, and shall continue till God hath "accomplished the number of his elect," and brought in his glorious kingdom,—who can estimate the intense satisfaction of the soul that God hath thus delighted to honor. As the harvest of redeemed souls is gathered in, and many sheaves lowly bend through the fullness and ripeness of knowledge derived from his sanctified instruction, his glorified spirit will welcome them with wonder and rejoicing.

That the writings of Bishop Hopkins are adapted to such ends, and with the dew of God's blessing upon them must produce the blessed results of glory to God and salvation to men, the reader cannot fail to perceive. They abound in awakening, health-giving doctrines, and are pervaded with a warmth, feeling, and earnestness of purpose, calculated to rouse the sensibilities and move the will. His treatises on deep theological topics, and his expositions, are, like the works of Dr. Isaac Barrow, his cotemporary, exhaustive of the subject. In their minuteness of subdivision, and subtlety of distinctions, they show the prevailing characteristics of the writings of the times in which he lived. The spirit in which this man of God conducted the controversial portions of

his discourses is worthy of praise and imitation. There is a fairness and candor in the statement of objections to his views and theories, which must gain for him the name of a generous and honorable opponent. He lived in unsettled times, when all questions in politics and religion were the subjects of angry debate and excited controversy. The most radical and extravagant opinions and principles were advocated, and intolerance was the prevailing temper of every party in Church and State. The minds of the people were active, and their energies were devoted to the maintenance of their liberties and religious privileges. Amid the lawlessness of the period, resulting from the changes frequently occurring, multitudes abused the doctrines of the grace of God, and lived in sin and profaneness because grace abounded, and in order that it might abound. Bishop Hopkins appears to have contended earnestly against this abuse. While he teaches convincingly that men are not justified by law and works of the law, he also shows that Christians are not "without law to God, but are under the law to Christ." He argues against the common objection that the doctrines of the free, sovereign, and unfrustrable grace of God are inconsistent with exhortations to sinners, and discourage appeals to the conscience and heart. This objection is met in two ways—by scriptural teaching, and by his own example to the contrary. He cordially embraced the apostolic and scriptural views of truth and doctrine, and set them forth in a clear and forcible manner. He as fully maintained the accountability of man. By the fear of the Lord, and by the all-sufficiency of Christ, he persuaded sinners to turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. His exhortations are direct, pointed, and fervid. They ply the conscience, the understanding and feelings with persistent and energetic force. The hearer or reader of such appeals must feel that escape from the obligation of immediate repentance, and return to God, cannot be evaded, nor can compliance with the invitation be delayed without incurring an aggravated condemnation. If under such faithful and solemn warnings the soul remains unaffected, and continues in rebellion against God, or at a distance and alienated from Jesus, still one useful thing is accom-

plished: the fact is clearly shown that man, by nature, has neither the will nor the power to do any thing spiritually good.

In his life, character, and writings, Bishop Hopkins agrees well with the portrait of an English Bishop of the sixteenth century, as drawn by Dr. Robert Hawker. That distinguished limner drew his portrait from the features and expressions of such godly bishops as Ridley and Latimer, Whitgift and Parker, Hall, Carlton and Davenant. He admits that all the servants of God, whose excellence he depicts, were not confined to the sixteenth century, but that a few were found in the seventeenth. There is reason to believe, therefore, that one so prominent and revered as Bishop Hopkins, did not escape his observation, and that he was included in the number of the great Chief Pastors which were commended to the admiration of the church, and to the imitation of her ministers. In justice to Hopkins it could not be otherwise. For he held the same views of divine truth. It might be said of him as of Usher, that "in the very blossom of his age he found the true sense of religion in his serious conversion to God." He knew experimentally the doctrine which he preached unto others. He labored incessantly in the word and doctrine of Christ. Visitations of his parishes were not mere official proceedings, but gave opportunity for spiritual converse with the clergy, and for confirming the souls of the faithful in their attachment to Christ and the Gospel.

Sermons, charges to the clergy and to candidates for orders, and even conversations at table, were improved for the conveyance of that lively word which "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness."

In the distribution of their patronage the bishops of that age acted in accordance with the principles enunciated in the formularies and ordination services of the Church. Nepotism was far from them. They were actuated by zeal for the Divine glory, and made choice of godly persons to serve Christ in the ministry of the word, and in the care of souls. Their official acts, their addresses to the reigning monarch, their discussions in convocation, and their real work as seen in the character of the actual

incumbents, prove that they rated livings not according to income in money, but by the good that was done to souls. The ministers generally were men who sympathized with the chief pastors, and partook of their self-denying spirit. Position and influence were assigned and enjoyed not according to the amount derived from the people, but according to the spiritual wealth and revenues which the people gained through their instrumentality.

It was, indeed, the golden age of the English Church. Her ministers were giants in understanding, and men of full stature in Christ. They were master workmen, and laid solidly the foundations of religious freedom and apostolic, primitive order. Pure and sublime truth, skillful expositions, winning and convincing apologies, massive and grand controversial writings, subtleties of logic and splendors of rhetoric, rich garlands of poetry and classic eloquence, all scattered abroad in profusion, give us a display of wealth, intellectual and spiritual, which is illustrated by the peerless condition of the Lord's people in the reign of Solomon. Every thing was of gold, and silver was counted as stones in the street. The church as they formed and left it was "all glorious within, and her clothing was of wrought gold." The robes of righteousness and true holiness enveloped her with ample folds, while the name and praise of her glorious Christ was "the golden girdle," which displayed the beauty and symmetry of her heavenly form.

The writings of Bishop Hopkins are humbly committed to the hands of Him who is all-sufficient to save his people, and commended to the stewards of God's mysteries, in hope that the Holy Spirit will bless them to the delight and edification of his ministers, to the calling of his redeemed, and to the glory of his great name.

C. W. Q.

THE

VANITY OF THE WORLD.

"*Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*" ECCLES. i. 2.

THE Preacher here mentioned, is no less a person than Solomon; and this whole book is no other than his Recantation Sermon. The text he preached on, is the same that I have chosen; and it contains the true and severe judgment he passed upon all things under the sun. Certainly, he, who had riches as plentiful *as the stones* of the street:* and *wisdom* as large *as the sand of the sea:*† could want no advantages, either to try experiments, or draw conclusions from them. And yet, when he had employed both,‡ in the critical search of true happiness and contentment, and had dissected and ransacked the whole world to find it, he returns disappointed of his hopes, and tired with his pursuit; and begins the sad narrative of his long wanderings and errors, with "*Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*"

The whole verse is loaden with emphases. And it is first observable, that he doth not glide into it, by any smooth connexion of sense or sentences; but, on a sudden breaks upon us, with a surprising abruptness, "*Vanity of vanities:*" which shews a mind so full of matter, that it could not attend the circumstance of a prologue to usher it in.

Again; it is all expressed in the abstract. It sufficed not to censure all things to be vain, but they are *vanity* itself.

And this abstract hath another heaped upon it, *vanity of vanities.* Now this reflexion of the same word upon itself, is alway used to signify the height and greatness of the thing expressed, as *King of Kings and Lord of Lords,* denotes the highest King and the most absolute Lord. So, here, *vanity of vanities* intimates to us the most exceeding superlative vanity imaginable.

Again; this is not only once pronounced, but doubled and repeated: partly, the more to confirm this truth to our belief, and thus Pharaoh's dream was doubled;§ and, partly, the more to imprint it upon our consideration. "*Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*"

* 1 Kings x. 27. † 1 Kings iv. 29. ‡ Eccles. i. 16. 17. § Gen. xli. 32.

But, though this be expressed in most general and comprehensive terms, yet it must not be taken in the utmost latitude, as if there were nothing at all of solid and real good extant. It is enough, if we understand the words in a sense restrained to the subject matter whereof he here treats. For the Wise Man himself exempts the Fear and Service of God,* from that *Vanity* under which he had concluded all other things. God and religion have in them a solid and substantial good: the one, as our utmost end and happiness; the other, as the best proportioned means to attain it.

When, therefore, he pronounceth all to be Vanity, it must be meant of all worldly and earthly things; for he speaks only of these.

And, if we enquire what these worldly things are, that have this censure of vanity so vehemently passed upon them, Saint John hath drawn up a full and true inventory of all the goods that are to be found in this great house of the universe: 1 John ii. 16; "*All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.*" *The lusts of the flesh,* are the pleasures of the world; which are all of them suited to gratify the sensual and fleshly part of man. The *lusts of the eyes,* are riches; so called, because their greatest serviceableness is only to make a glittering and dazzling shew. Which sense Solomon approves: Eccles. v. 11; "*What good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?*" *The pride of life* is honour and dignity; that flatulent and airy notion, that puffs up men's pride and vain-glory, and makes them look upon their inferiors as though they were not their fellow-creatures. This is all that the world can shew, Pleasures, Riches, Honours; and this that *all,* concerning which the wise man pronounceth that it is *Vanity.*

For these things, though they make a fair and gaudy shew, yet it is all but shew and appearance. As bubbles, blown into the air, will represent great variety of orient and glittering colours: not, as some suppose, that there are any such really there; but only they appear so to us, through a false reflection of light cast upon them: so truly this world, this earth on which we live, is nothing else but a great bubble blown up by the breath of God in the midst of the air where it now hangs. It sparkles with ten thousand glories: not that they are so in themselves; but only they seem so to us through the false light, by which we look upon them. If we come to grasp it, like a thin film, it breaks, and leaves nothing but wind and disappointment in our hands: as histories report of the fruits that grow near the Dead Sea, where once Sodom and Gomorrah

* Eccles. xii. 13.

stood, they appear very fair and beautiful to the eye, but, if they be crushed, turn straight to smoke and ashes.*

The subject which I have propounded to discourse of, is this Vanity of the World, and of all things here below: that, being hereof convinced, we may desist our vain pursuit of vain objects; and may set our affections on those things which are above, which are the alone valuable, because the only permanent and stable good.

Whence is it that we are become so degenerate, that we, who have immortal and heaven-born souls, should stake them down to these perishing enjoyments? Whence is it, that we, who should soar aloft unto God, and were to that end fitted with the fleet wings of meditation and affection, to cut through the heavens in an instant, and to appear there before the throne of the great God, that we should lie here groveling in the thick clay and muck of this world, as if the serpent's curse were become ours, to creep upon our bellies, and to lick up the dust of the earth?† Do we not shamefully degrade ourselves, when we stoop to admire what is so vastly below us, and barter away our precious souls, souls more worth than ten thousand worlds, only to gain some small part of one? Certainly, the God of this World hath blinded men's eyes, and cast a strange mist before them, that they cannot discern, what is most evident and obvious; even the instability and vanity of all sublunary enjoyments.

That I may therefore contribute somewhat to scatter this mist, I shall endeavour to represent to you the native and genuine vanity that is in all earthly things, free from that deceitful varnish, which the Devil usually puts upon them; and so to deform and wound that great sorcerer, that his charms may have no more power to prevail over you.

I. Now, that we may rightly proceed in this, I shall PREMISE these two or three things.

1. THERE IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD VAIN IN RESPECT OF ITS NATURAL BEING.

Whatsoever God hath made, is, in its kind, good. And so the Great Creator pronounced of them, when he took a survey of all the works of his hands. Gen. i. 31; "*God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold it was very good.*" There is a most harmonious order and beauty in all the creation, and every part of it. And therefore Solomon must not be here so interpreted, as if he disparaged

* Tacit. Hist. lib. v. *Fumum exhalant, et fastiscunt in vagum pulverem.* Solin. Joseph. Antiquit. l. v. c. 5.

† Gen. iii. 14.

the works of God, in pronouncing them all *Vanity*. Certainly he doth not libel his Creator; nor upbraid him, as though he had filled the world only with vain toys and trifles.

If we regard the wonderful artifice and wisdom, that shine forth in the frame of nature, we cannot have so unworthy a thought, either of the world itself, or of God who made it.

View the Sun, next unto God, the great *Father of lights*:* view the numerous assembly of the Stars: observe their influences, their courses and measures: is it a vain or impertinent thing, to spread forth the heavens, and to beat out a path for every one of these to walk in! The Air, that thin and subtle veil, that God hath spread over the face of nature: the Earth, that God hath poised in the midst of the air: and the whole Universe, in the midst of a vast and boundless nothing: the great Sea, whose proud waves God binds in with a girdle of sand; and checks its rage by a body almost as unsettled and rolling as itself: the various kinds of Creatures, that God governs by a wonderful economy: the great family of brute Beasts, which God brings up and educates without disorder: but especially Man, the lord and chief of the world, that knot that God hath tied between heaven and earth, that sacred band of time with eternity.

If we consider the frame and composure of all these things in themselves, or their usefulness and subserviency unto us, we shall be so far from branding them with vanity, that, unless our contemplations lead us from natural things to the great God who formed them, we might rather fear lest their beauty and excellency should inveigle us, as it did the heathen, to look no farther for a Deity, but worship them as gods.

2. THERE IS NOTHING VAIN IN RESPECT OF GOD THE CREATOR.

He makes his ends out of all; for they all glorify him according to their several ranks and orders; and to rational and considerate men, are most evident demonstrations of his infinite being, wisdom, and power. In which sense the Apostle tells us; Rom. i. 20; "*The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.*" †

God hath composed two books by the diligent study of which we may attain to the knowledge of himself; the Book of the Creatures, and the Book of the Scriptures.

* James. i. 17.

† Εχομεν δε εννοιαν Θεα πρωτον μεν απο τα καλλη των εφαινομενων προσλαμβανοντες. Ουδεν γαρ των καλων εικη, και ως ετυχε γινεται Plut. de Placitus, Philos. l. i. c. 6.

The Book of the Creatures is written in those great letters of heaven and earth, the air and sea; and, by these, we may spell out somewhat of God He made them for our instruction, as well as for our service. The least and vilest of them read us lectures of his glorious attributes; nor is it any absurdity to say, that, as they are all the works of his Hand, so they are all the words of his Mouth.

Indeed, this knowledge that the creatures give us of the Creator, cannot suffice to make us happy, though it may be sufficient to make us inexcusable.* We could never have collected from them those mysterious discoveries of God, which the scriptures exhibit, and which are so necessary to our eternal bliss; for what signature is there stamped upon any of the creatures of a Trinity in Unity; of the eternal generation, or temporal incarnation of the Son of God? What creature could have informed us of our first fall, and guilt contracted by it? Or where can we find the copy of the Covenant of Works or of Grace, printed upon any of the creatures? All the great sages of the world, though they were nature's secretaries, and ransacked its abstrusest secrets, yet all their learning and knowledge could never discover that sacred mystery of a Crucified Saviour. These are truths, which nature and reason are so far from finding out, that they can scarce receive them when disovered:† and, therefore, God hath manifested them to us by the light and revelation of the Holy Scriptures.

But yet so much of God as belongs to those two great titles of Creator and Governor of the World, our reason may collect from created and visible things; running up their consequences, till they are all resolved into the first cause and origin of all.

Therefore, ALL THE VANITY, THAT IS IN WORLDLY THINGS, IS ONLY IN RESPECT OF THE SIN AND FOLLY OF MAN. For those things are said to be vain, which neither do nor can perform what we expect from them.

Our great expectation is happiness: and our great folly is that we think to obtain it by the enjoyments of this world. This makes men pursue pleasures, hoard up riches, court honours and preferments, because they look with an overweening conceit on these things, as such as can make them truly happy. Whereas to seek for happiness among these worldly things, is but to seek the living among the dead: yea, it is but to search for happiness among those things, which are the very root and occasion of all our misery. They are all of them leaky and broken cisterns, and cannot hold this living

* Rom. i. 20, 21. † 1. Cor. ii. 14.

water. This is it which makes them charged with vanity, * because in our perverted fancy, we look upon them as stable, permanent, and satisfactory; fix them as our journey's end, which ought only to be used by us in our passage; and expect much more from them, than they can yield: and so, indeed, the vanity is not so much theirs, as ours.

There are some things, as St. Austin † and the Schools ‡ from him do well distinguish, which must be only enjoyed, other things that must be only used. To enjoy, is, to cleave to an object by love, for its own sake; § and this belongs only to God. What we use, we refer to the obtaining of what we desire to enjoy: ‖ and this belongs to the Creatures. So that we ought to use the Creatures, that we may arrive at the Creator. ¶ We may serve ourselves of them, but we must alone enjoy him.

Now that, which makes the whole world become vanity, is when we break this order of use and fruition; when we set up any particular created good as our end and happiness, which ought only to be used as a means to attain it. All things in the world are in themselves good; but, when we propound them as the greatest and highest good that we expect satisfaction from, this turns them all into vanity; and so every thing, besides God, becomes nothing.

And thus we have a brief account whence proceeds this Vanity of the World: not from the nature of things; but from those vain hopes and expectations we build upon them, for that happiness which they cannot afford.

II. It remains, therefore, to DISPLAY before you this Vanity of the World, in some more remarkable particulars. Whereof take these following instances.

1 The Vanity of the World appears in this, THAT ALL ITS GLORY AND SPLENDOUR DEPENDS MERELY UPON OPINION AND FANCY.

It is not so much what things are, as what we account them, that makes them good or evil: and what can be vainer, than that, which borrows its worth from so vain and fickle a thing as our estimation? And, therefore, we find the things of the world rated diversely,

* Ταραχος ὁ κυριωτατος ταις ανθρωπιναις ψυχαις γινεται εν τῳ ταυτα μακαρια τε δοξαζειν και αφθαρτα. Epic. apud Laert. in Vita Epicuri.

† Aug. Doct. Christ. l. i. c. 3.

‡ Lomb. l. i. d. l. Aquin. l. 12. q. 11. 16. Durand. l. i. d. 1. q. 4. Arim. d. l. 4. 3. Art. 2. Altiss. l. iii. tract. 10.

§ *Frui est, amore alicui rei inhærere propter seipsam.* Aug. Doct. Christ. l. i. c. 4.

‖ *Uti, autem, quod in usum venerit ad id quod amas, obtinendum referre.* Id. ibid.

¶ *Utendum est hoc mundo, non fruendum; ut invisibilia Dei, per ea quæ facta sunt, intelligantur: hoc est, ut de temporalibus æterna capiantur.* Aug. ibid.

according to the esteem that men have of them.* What were gold and silver, had not men's fancy stamped upon them an excellency far beyond their natural usefulness? This great idol of the world was of no value among those barbarous nations, where abundance made it vile. They preferred glass and beads before it; and made that their treasure, which we make our scorn. They despise our riches, and we theirs: and true reason will tell us, that both the one and the other are in themselves alike despicable; and it is only fancy, that puts such an immodest and extravagant price upon them, far above their natural worth. Should the whole world conspire together to depose gold and silver from that sovereignty they have usurped over us, they might for ever lie hid in the bowels of the earth, ere their true usefulness would entice any to the pains and hazard of digging them out into the light.

Indeed, the whole use of what we so much dote upon, is merely fantastical: and, to make ourselves needy, we have invented an artificial kind of riches; which are no more necessary to the service of sober nature, than jewels and bracelets were to that plane-tree which Xerxes so ridiculously adorned. † And, although we eagerly pursue these things, and count ourselves poor and indigent without them: yet possibly right reason will dictate, that they are no more needful to us, than to brute or senseless creatures; and that it would be altogether as ridiculous for a man to be decked with them, as for a beast or plant, were it but as uncommon. These precious trifles, when they are hung about us, make no more either to the warmth or defence of the body, than, if they were hung upon a tree, they could make its leaves more verdant, or its shade more refreshing. ‡ Doth any man lie the softer, because his bed-posts are gilt? Doth his meat and drink relish the better, because served up in gold? Is his house more convienent, because better carved or painted? Or are his clothes more fit, becuse more fashionable than another's? And, if they are not necessary to these natural uses, all that is left them is but fancy and opinion.

Indeed, mankind cozen themselves by compact; and, by setting a value upon things that are rare, have made many think them-

* *Quantum apud nos Indicis margaritis pretium est, tantum apud Indos in curalio. Namque istâ persuasione gentium constant.* Plin. lib. xxxii. de Gem. Benzoni del Mondo Nuovo. lib. i.

† Ælian l. ii. c. 14.

‡ Ταυτα εαυτα γιγνεται, των μεν ποικιλων ἱματιων ὠδεν τι μαλλον ϑαλαττειν δυναμενων των δε χρυσοφορων οικιων ὠδεν τι μαλλον σκεπασων· των δε εκπωματων των αργυρων ὠκ ωφελουντων τον ποτον, ὠδε των χρυσων, ὠδε των ελεφαντινων ου κλινων τον ὑπνον ἡδιω παρεχομενων. Lucian Cynicus.

selves poor: whereas God and nature made all equally wealthy, had they not artificially impoverished themselves. It is nothing but conceit, that makes the difference between the richest and the meanest, if both enjoy necessaries: for what are all their superfluous riches, but a load, that men's covetousness lays upon them? They are but like Roman Slaves, that were wont to carry heavy burdens of bread upon their backs, whereof others eat as large a share as they.* Whatsoever is more than barely to satisfy the cravings of nature, is of no other use but only to look upon.† Thy lands, thy houses, and fair estate, are but pictures of things. The poorest, that sees them, enjoys as much of them as thyself: yea, and if men could be contented with reason, all, that they behold with their eyes, is as much theirs, as it is the owner's.

And, indeed, if we strip all these admired nothings to their naked principles, we shall find them as base and sordid, as the meanest of those things which we spurn and despise: only, art or nature put new shapes upon them; and fancy, a price upon those shapes. ‡ What are gold and silver, but diversified earth, hard and shining clay? The very place where they are bred, the entrails of the earth, upbraids us for accounting them precious. The best and richest perfumes, what are they, but the clammy sweat of trees, or the mucous froth of beasts? The softest silks are but the excrement of a vile worm. The most racy and generous wines are nothing else but puddle-water strained through a vine. Our choicest delicacies are but dirt, cooked and served up to us in various forms. The very same things which we contemn under one shape, we admire in another; and with this, fancy and custom have conspired together to cheat us.

Think, O Worldling! when thou castest thy greedy eyes upon thy riches, think, "Here are bags, that only fancy hath filled with treasure, which else were filled with dirt. Here are trifles, that only fancy hath called jewels, which else were no better then com-

* ——————— *Ut, si*
Reticulum panis venales inter onusto
Forte vehas humero, nihilo plus accipias quam
Qui nil portarit. Hor. Sat. l. i. s. 1.

† Eccles. v. 11.

‡ Ὁ φαλερνος χυλαριον εξι ζαφυλιs· και ἡ περιπορφυρος τριχια προβατιs αἱματιῳ κογχης δεδευμενα. Οὑτως δε παρ ὁλον τον βιον ποιειν, και οσα λιαν αξιοπιζοτατα πραγματα φανταζεται απογυμνων αυτα, και την ευτελειαν αυτων καθορων, και την ἰζοριαν ὑφ' ἡ σεμνυνεται περιαιρειν. M. Anto. de Seipso. l. vi. s. 13. Edit. Cas. Το σαπρον της ἐκαζω ὑποκειμενης ὑλης· ὑδωρ, κονις, οζαρια, γρασος, η παλιν, πωροι γης, τα μαρμαρα· και ὑποζαθμαι, ο χρυσος, ὁ αργυρος· και τριχια, ἡ εσθης· και ἁιμα, ἡ πορφυρα. Id. l. ix. s. 36.

mon pebbles. And shall I lay the foundation of my content and happiness upon a fancy; a thing more light and wavering than the very air?"

Nay, consider, that a distempered fancy can easily alter a man's condition, and put what shape it pleaseth upon it. If a black and sullen melancholy seizeth the spirits, it will make him complain of poverty in the midst of his abundance; of pain and sickness, in the midst of his health and strength. It is true, these are but the effects of a distorted fancy; but, though his sickness and poverty be not real, yet the torment of them is. It is all one, as to our disquiet, whether we be indeed unhappy, or only imagine ourselves so.*

Again: If the fancy be more merrily perverted, straight they are nothing less than kings or emperors, in their own conceit. A straw is as majestic as a scepter. They will speak of their rags as magnificently, as if they were robes; and look upon all that come near them, as their subjects or servants. They make every stone a gem, every cottage a palace. All they see is their own; and all their own is most excellent. Now, what think you: are these things vain, or no? I doubt not but you will conclude them most extremely vain; and yet they serve their turns as well, and bring them in as much solace and contentment, as if they were really what they imagine them. Thus Thrasyllus noted down all the ships, that arrived at the port of Athens;† thinking them and their merchandise to be all his own: and, when cured of that pleasant madness, confessed, that he never in his whole life enjoyed so much content, as in that conceited wealth those ships brought him.‡ And indeed for my part, I know not whether these things are more vain in the fancy, or in the reality. Such is the exceeding Vanity of all things in the World, that, were it not for the eternal concernments of the soul, which cannot be so well regarded under a suspension or distraction of reason, I should make no difficulty to account and prove them the happiest men on earth.

If then there be so great a power in fancy, how vain must all those things be, which you pursue with eagerness and impatience! since a vain fancy, without them, can give you as much satisfaction, as if you enjoyed them all: and a vain fancy can, on the other hand, in the greatest abundance of them, make your lives as wearisome and vexatious, as if you enjoyed nothing.

That is the First Demonstration.

* Ταρασσει τους ανθρωπους, ου τα πραγματα αλλα τα περι των πραγματων δογματα. Epictet. Enchir. c. 5. & Dissert. l. iii. c. 19. † Ælian. l. iv. c. 25.

‡ Ελεγεν μηδεποτε ηθθηναι τοσουτον, οσον τοτε ηδετο επι ταις μηδεν αυτω προσηκουσαις, ναυσιν απω σωζομεναις. Id. ibid.

2. The Vanity of the World appears in ITS DECEITFULNESS AND TREACHERY. It is not only vanity, but a lying vanity; and betrays both our hopes and our souls.

(1.) It betrays our *Hopes*, and leaves us nothing but disappointment, when it promiseth satisfaction and happiness. What strange confidences do we build upon the false flatteries of the world! In our prosperity we sing a *Requiem* to ourselves; and are ready to say, our *mountain* is so *strong*, that it *shall never be moved:* Psal. xxx. 6, 7; but, within a while, God hath shaken it, like that of Sinai: and wrapped it about with clouds and thick darkness.

(2.) It betrays the *Soul* to guilt and eternal condemnation: for, usually, the world entangles it in strong, though secret and insensible snares; and insinuates into the heart that love of itself, which is inconsistent with the love of God.

The world is the Devil's factor, and drives on the designs of hell. The Apostle hath told us, 1 Tim. vi. 9; "*They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*"

And, because of the subserviency of worldly enjoyments to men's lusts, it is almost as impossible a thing to moderate our affections towards them, or to bound our appetites and desires, as it is to assuage the thirst of a dropsy by drinking, or to keep that fire from increasing into which we are still casting new fuel. And, therefore, our Saviour hath pronounced it as hard *for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, as for a camel to go through a needle's eye.** As Judas gave a sign to the officers that came with him to apprehend Jesus, "*Whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he: hold him fast*:"† the same sign doth the world give the Devil: "Whomsoever I shall caress and favour, whomsoever I shall heap honour and riches on, whomsoever I shall embrace and kiss, the same is he, hold him fast." Such a darling of the world is too often fast bound in the silken bands of voluptuousness, and consigned over to be fast bound in chains of massy darkness.

3. As all things in the World are lying Vanities, so are they all VEXATIOUS. They are infamous, to a proverb; "Uncertain comforts, but most certain crosses." And, therefore, the Wise Man concludes them all to be, not only *Vanity*, but *Vexation of Spirit.*

There is a Fourfold Vexatiousness in all worldly things.

(1.) There is a *great deal of turmoil and trouble in getting them.* Nothing can be acquired without it. The sweat of Adam's brows hath streamed down along upon ours; and the curse, together with

* Luke xviii. 25. † Matt. xxvi. 48.

it, that in sorrow we should eat of that which toil and labour hath provided for us.* Men rise early, and go to bed late, and eat the bread of carefulness; and such is either their curse or their folly, that they make their lives uncomfortable, only to get the comforts of life.

(2.) Whether they get them, or no, yet still *they are disappointed in their hopes.* If they cannot compass their designs, then they are tormented; because they fall short of what they laboured for: if they do compass them, yet still they are tormented; because what they laboured for, falls short of what they expected from it.†

The truth is, the world is much better in shew than substance: and those very things we admire before we enjoy them, yet afterward we find much less in them than we expected. As he, that sees a falling star shoot through the air and draw after it a long train of light, runs to the place, and, thinking to get some bright and glittering thing, catches up nothing but a filthy jelly; such is the disappointment we find in our pursuit after the enjoyments of this world: they make a glorious shew at a distance; but, when we come near them, we find our hopes deluded, and nothing upon the place but a vile slime.

(3.) They are all *vexation while we enjoy them.* Be it what it will, that we possess of the world it is but by fits at most, that we take any great pleasure in it: and then, what between cares and designs to secure the continuance of it, and fears of losing it, the comfort of enjoying it is wholly swallowed up. For strong affections, begetting strong fears, do always lessen the delight of present enjoyments.‡ This is the unhappiness of all things in the world, that, if we set any price and value upon them, we lose much of the sweetness of them, by fearing to lose them.

(4.) They are all *vexatious,* as in their enjoyment, *so especially in their loss.* Whatever we set our hearts upon, we may assure ourselves, and experience will teach it us, that the pleasure of possessing it will not near countervail the bitterness of losing it: and, as if God had on purpose so ordained it to take off our hearts from the world, the better we esteem any thing, the more vanity and vexation shall we find in it; for the more will our care and perplexity in keeping it, and the more our grief and torment in losing it, be increased. That is a Third Demonstration.

* Gen. iii. 19.

† *Ex his tristitia sequitur, si aut non successit, aut successus pudet.* Senec. de Tranquil. c. 11.

‡ Ἡ γαρ σφοδρα περι ἐιχαζυν εμιθυμια, σφοδροτατον φοβον εκποιουσα τὸ μη παραμενειν, ασθενη τὴν χαριν ποιει και ἀβεβαιον, ωσπερ φλογα καταπνεομενην. Plut. de Tranquil. xvi.

4. The Vanity of the World appears in this, THAT A LITTLE CROSS WILL EMBITTER GREAT COMFORTS.

One *dead fly* is enough to corrupt a whole *box* of the world's most fragrant *ointment*. How much will only the aching of a tooth, a fit of the stone or gout, deaden and dishearten us, to all the joys and pleasures of life! Certainly, the world must needs be vain, that cannot bear out the brunt of a little pain or sickness. The least cross accident is enough to discompose all our delights. And, indeed, there are so many ingredients required to make up worldly felicity, riches, health, friends, honour, good name, and the like;* that, if any of these be wanting, the whole composition is spoiled, and we shall take advantage against ourselves to conclude we are miserable. For, such is the peevishness of our nature, that, if we have not all we would, we take no content in any thing we have.

And, besides, we are apt to slide off from the smoother part of our lives, as flies from glass, and to stick only on the rougher passages.† For, neither is sense capable to be so much or so long affected with the impressions of pleasure, as of pain; since never could there yet be any delights invented as piercing, as there are many torments: nor yet is our busy remembrance so officious, in calling back the pleasant passages of our days to our review, as those that have been more gloomy and dolorous. And though it be our sin to look more upon the crosses we find, than the comforts we enjoy; yet here we may likewise see how vain a thing it is for us to expect happiness and contentment from the world, whose crosses as they are more, so they are more considerable than its comforts.

5. Consider, THE LONGER WE ENJOY ANY WORLDLY THING, THE MORE FLAT AND INSIPID DOTH IT GROW. We are soon at the bottom, and find nothing but dregs there. In all the pleasures of life, either our spirits sink and fall under the continuance of them, as not able to bear a constant tension and emotion; or the delight consists merely in the novelty and variety of the objects, which when we are made more familiar with, are but dull, because ordinary: and so they either tire our appetites, or deceive our

* Φαινεται και των εκτος αγαθων προσδεομενη (ευδαιμονια). Ενιων τητωμενοι ρᾳδιαινουσι το μακαριον, οιον ευγενειας, ευτεχνιας, καλλους.—Ου παντ γαρ ευδαιμονικος, ὁ τεν ιδειαν παναισχης, η δυσγενης, η μονωτης, και ατεκνος. Arist. Eth. l. i. c. 8. & l. x. c. 8.

† Τουτο την ἐνθυμιαν ἐπιταρασσει· ὁταν ωσπερ αἱ μυιαι των λειων τοπων ἐν τοις κατοπτροις ἀπολισθαινουσι, ταις δε τραχυτησι προσεχονται και ταις ἀμυχαις· οὑτως ἀνθρωποι, των ἱλαρων και προσηνων ἀπορρεοντες, ἐμπλεκονται ταις των ἀηδων ἀναμνησεσι. Plutarch. de Tranquil. xv.

hopes. And, therefore, the most artificial voluptuaries have always allowed themselves an intermission in their pleasures, to recruit nature and sharpen their sensual desires: without which, they would but cloy and surfeit; and, instead of pleasures, prove only a waste and oppression to the spirits. Epicurus himself,* the great Master and Servant of Pleasure, who made it the highest good and chiefest happiness of man, set himself certain days of abstinence in course, wherein he would but niggardly satisfy his stomach; well knowing, that the pleasure of gluttony could never be so much enhanced, as by an interval of hunger.

For what is a furnished table, to him, whose constant meals overtake one another, but only the heaping of food upon crudities and indigestion? What the titles of honour, to a person born noble? They signify no more to him, than it doth to another man, when he hears himself called by his ordinary name. What is respect and honour, to a man long accustomed to it? It brings him no great content when he hath it, but torments him when he fails of it. Give these things, to those, that are acquainted with them, if you would have them valued. Bring a poor man to a table of delicacies: invest an ignoble person with honours and dignities: give respect to a despised person; and, for the present, you bless them. But time and custom will wear off this content: and the tediousness † even of such a life as this will make them willing, at least for their divertisement and recreation, to retire to their homely cells and station. ‡ For, as it is with those that are accustomed to strong perfumes, they themselves cannot scent those odours, which to others that use them not are most sweet and fragrant; so it fares with us in the long continuance of worldly enjoyments: our senses are so stuffed and even suffocated with them, that we cannot perceive them; and, unless we purchase pleasures by alternate sorrow, they are but lost upon us.

Now, how vain must the world needs be, whose comforts are not valuable while we have them, but while we have them not! And how vain are those joys, for which we must pay down as much

* *Certos habebat dies ipse Magister Voluptatis Epicurus, quibus malignè famem extingueret.* Sen. Ep. 18.—Ep. ad Menœceum apud Diog. Laert. in Vita Epic. το συνεθιζειν εν ταις ἁπλαις και υ πολυτελεσι διαιταις . . . . . τοις πολυτελεσιν εκ διαλειμματων προσερχομενους, χρειττονας ἡμας διατιθησι.

† ————*Sunt talis quoque tædia vitæ.*
Magna. Voluptates commendat rarior usus. Juv. Sat. xi. 206.

‡ *Non existimes me ducere te ad modicas cœnas et pauperum cellas, et quicquid aliud est per quod luxuria divitiarum tædio ludit.* Sen. Ep. 18.

grief, as the joys themselves are worth! So that, upon balancing the account, there remains nothing to us: and it had been altogether as good, to have enjoyed nothing.

6. Again, consider, ALL THE PLEASURE OF THE WORLD, IS NOTHING ELSE BUT A TEDIOUS REPETITION OF THE SAME THINGS.

Our life consists in a round of actions:* and what can be duller, than still to be doing the same things over and over again?

Ask the most frolic gallant, whose only study it is how he may pass his time merrily and live happily: what account can he give of his pleasures, but that from his bed he riseth to his table, from his table to his sports, from them he tumbles into his bed again? This is the most genteel and fashionable life.

And are these the great joys, that a world so prized and so admired can afford? One half of his pleasant life he spends in sleep, a dull state, which we may rather reckon to death than life. The other half he spends in clogging his appetite, and tiring his body, and then to sleep again. What generous and noble designs are these! Fit for high spirits and high births: while the contemptible peasants are left to do the drudgery of the world, and to be the only serviceable men in it. Nay, rather what a pitiful circle is this, still to be doing the same things, and things which we have before searched and often found all that is in them! So that even a heathen could say, † That not only a valiant or a miserable man might desire to die; but a nice and delicate man, as disdaining the irksome repetition of the same things.

7. The Vanity of the World appears in this, THAT IT CAN STAND US IN NO STEAD, THEN WHEN WE HAVE THE GREATEST NEED OF SUPPORT AND COMFORT.

There be two seasons especially, in which the soul wants relief and comfort: and they are, in Trouble of Conscience, and at the Hour of Death. Now in each of these the world shews itself to be exceeding vain and useless.

(1.) The world appears to be vain, *when we are under Trouble of Conscience.*

What choice comforts the soul then stands in need of, those, who have felt the sting and terrors of it, can best tell. The torments they then feel, next to those of the damned, are the most intolerable, and the most unutterable. God sets them up as his mark; and

* Παντα εξ αιδιου ὁμοειδη και αιακυκλουμενα· και ουδεν διαφερει ποτερον εν ἑκατον ετεσιν, ἡ εν διακοσιοις, ἡ εν τῳ ἀπειρῳ χρονῳ τα αυτα τις οψεται. Antonin. l. ii. s. 14.

† *Cogita quamdiu eadem facias; Cibus, somnus, libido. Mori velle, non tantum prudens et fortis aut miser, sed etiam fastidiosus potest.* Sen. Ep. 77.

shoots his arrows, dipped in flaming poison, into the very midst of their souls. He kindles a secret fire in them, that consumes their bones, dries up their marrow, and scorches their entrails; and, such is the spreading rage of it, that ofttimes it smokes out at their mouths in despairing outcries.

The *spirit of a man*, saith Solomon, Prov. xviii. 14, *will sustain his infirmity*: i. e. the natural cheerfulness and vivacity of a man's spirit, will enable him to bear up under bodily pains: *but a wounded spirit who can bear?* When our prop itself is broken, we must needs sink; and fall under the most gloomy apprehensions, that guilt and hell can create in a soul, already singed with those eternal flames into which with unspeakable horror it daily expects to be plunged. Oh! think what exact torture thou must needs endure, when God shall make deep wounds in thy spirit; and let fall great drops of his burning wrath, on that part of thy soul, that is infinitely more tender and sensible than the apple of thine eye. Imagine what sharp and intolerable pains those martyrs sustained, who, as the Apostle tells us, Heb. xi. 37, *were sawn asunder.* Or, suppose that thou thyself were now under the ragged teeth of a saw, drawn to and fro upon the tenderest parts of thy body; tearing thy flesh, thy nerves, and sinews; grating and jarring upon thy very bones; yet all the extremity of this, is nothing to what torments the conscience feels, when God causeth his sword to enter into it, to rive it up: when he makes deep and bloody wounds in it, and, instead of pouring in healing balm, with a heavy hand chafes them with fire and brimstone

Now in such a time of anguish and distress as this, what is there that can relieve the afflicted soul? The worlding, that heaps up his ill-gotten treasures and wallows in thick clay, when God comes to ransack his conscience and to set before him the guilt of his sins, will then know, with terror and amazement, that there is a justice which gold and silver cannot bribe. The voluptuous person will no longer relish any savouriness in his carnal delights, when once God *writes bitter things against him:* Job xiii. 26. What is mirth and music to him, that can now hear nothing but the screeches of his own conscience? What is a full cup to him, that can now taste nothing but the cup of fury and trembling? Little content will the noble take in his honourable titles, if all this while his conscience call him reprobate. A title of honour will no more abate the torments of conscience, than it doth mitigate Beelzebub's torments to be styled Prince of the Devils. All the world's honey will not serve to allay the envenomed stingings of conscience.

That is a fiery serpent, a deaf adder, that will not be charmed by all the alluring pleasures of the world. These are vain and impertinent to one, whose thoughts are wholly possessed with the fear of wrath and hell, from which these cannot deliver him. When God makes a wound in the spirit, the whole world cannot make a plaster broad enough to cover it.

(2.) The world is a vain and useless thing *at the Hour of Death.*

Possibly, many of us may never conflict with the Terrors of Conscience, nor have that conviction of the World's Vanity: but yet we must all conflict with death, that King of Terrors.

Suppose, therefore, what must certainly once be, that we were now gasping our last, our tongues faltering, our eyestrings breaking, our limbs quivering, a dead cold stiffness invading us; were our souls tossed to and fro upon our expiring breath, and, like wrecks at sea, sometimes cast up, and by and by sucked back again, what could stand us in stead, and make our passage happy at such a time as this?

Now the soul requires the strongest, the richest cordials. Prepare it one mingled of the best ingredients the whole world can afford; cast into the cup riches, honour, pleasure, the quintessence of all that is here desirable: yet, alas! what is all this world to a dying man, who is just leaving it?

Thy wicked companions, with whom thou hast laughed and sinned away thy freshest years, will in this thy last extremity forsake thee; or, if they do attend so sad a spectacle, alas, what miserable comforters will they be! They will then prove another bad conscience to thee; and bring to thy remembrance with horror the sins, which thou hast committed by their enticement, or they by thine. Thy mirth and jollity will then be turned into groans and howlings. All things will stare ruthfully upon thee; and, when thou callest upon them for help, confess their impotency to rescue thee from the gripe of death and from the doom of justice.*

Sickness is usually a busy time with conscience; and, when it is packing up for a remove into the other world, it will be sure to gather together all the sins of a man's life, and bind them as a heavy and insupportable burden upon his soul. Can thy sensual pleasures divert thee now? As they have served thee to pass away the tediousness of time, can they serve to pass away the infinite tediousness of eternity? Nay, how can it otherwise be, but that a mind, long soaked and softened by these, should be

* *Non domus et fundus, non æris acervus et auri,*
Ægroto domini deduxit corpore febres,
Non animo curas. Horat. Ep. 2. Lib. i.

made the more capable of receiving deep impressions of grief, anguish, and despair?

Indeed, while we eagerly pursue any of these worldly enjoyments, we are but running after a shadow: and, as shadows vanish, and are swallowed up in the greater shade of night; so, when the night of death shall cast its thick shade about us, and wrap us up in deep and substantial darkness, all these vain shadows will then disappear and vanish quite out of sight.

Now could we have the same opinion of the world in the time of our health and prosperity, as we shall certainly have when we lie languishing and drawing on to eternity, we should be able then with a generous scorn to live above it and despise it. Shall we prize those comforts, which will be none to us, when we have the greatest need of comfort? Shall we glue our affections to that, which either is so faithless that it will not, or so weak that it cannot help us?

So vain a thing is it, that it cannot resist the disgrace, that sleep or only winking doth. Shut but your eyes, and what becomes of all the pomp and lustre, the beauty and splendour, that we so much admire in the world? It all vanisheth into darkness and nothing. Sleep snatcheth us from it; and, for the time, we have no more enjoyment of it than if we were dead. Every night we die in our beds; and yet every day are so immersed in the pleasures and businesses of the world, as if we were never to die indeed.

Since, therefore, we have higher and nobler objects to fix our affections on, let us not lavish them out upon these worldly vanities, which can at no time prove real comforts unto us; and then least of all, when we have most need of comfort. That is a Seventh Demonstration.

8. Again. All things in the World are vain, BECAUSE THEY ARE UNSUITABLE.

True, indeed, they are suited to the necessities of the body, and serve to feed and clothe that; but he is a beast, or worse, that reckons himself provided for, when only his bodily wants are supplied. Have we not all of us precious and immortal Souls, capable and desirous of happiness? Do not these crave to be satisfied? Do they not deserve to be heard? Shall our vile bodies, which are but dust and worms'-meat, engross all our care how to please and pamper them, and shall the necessities of our never-dying souls be neglected? What have you laid up in store for these? Alas! that, which most men busy themselves about, is to heap up temporal riches, to *join house to house, lay field to field, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth:* Isaiah v. 8.

But know, thou dost but give thy soul husks and swine's-meat, when thou settest the whole world before it. And, therefore, our Saviour justly brands the rich man in the Gospel for a *fool*, that, when he had stuffed up his barns with corn, said to his soul, "*Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years:*" Luke xii. 19; a fool indeed! to measure the soul's goods by the barn, or by the bushel.

The very same is the folly of most men, who think they are in all respects well provided for, if they can but scrape together a great estate; whereas the soul can no more live upon these things, than the body can upon a thought or notion.

There is a three-fold unsuitableness, between worldly things and the soul.

(1.) *The soul is Spiritual: these are drossy and material.* Of all things belonging to a man, his breath is the most subtle, invisible, and spiritual. But now the soul is called the Breath of God; Gen. ii. 7; and therefore must needs be spiritual in a high degree.

And what then hath a spiritual soul to do with clods of earth, or acres of land; with barns full of corn, or bags full of gold? These are too thick and gross to correspond with its refined nature.

But rather bring spiritual things to spiritual. God who is the *Father of Spirits*, Heb. xii. 9, his love and favour, an interest in him, and communion with him, the consolations of the Holy Ghost, the actings of grace, and the hopes of glory; these spiritual and clarified essences, which a carnal eye cannot see, nor a carnal judgment value; these are most suitable to the soul, that is a spirit, and ought not to be unequally yoked to the dregs and dross of earthly enjoyments.

(2.) *The soul is Immortal; but all worldly things are perishing, and wear out in the using.* And, therefore, it was but small comfort, when the rich man sung his requiem, to say, *Soul, take thy ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years.* Thou fool! what is an estate for many years, to a soul whose duration is not measured by years, but by eternity? What, when those years of plenty are expired? How destitute will thy soul be when it shall have outlived all its good things! It may out-live them, even in this world. God may nip and blast all that thou settest thy heart on; and make all thy comforts fall off from thee, like so many withered leaves. However, if thou hast no other than what this miserable world can afford, thou shall certainly out-live them in the world to come: and what wilt thou do, not in those years, but in that eternity of famine?

As it is with those, that are invited to feast in some noble

family, the furniture is rich, the entertainment splendid and magnificent; but, when they depart, they cannot, of all that pomp and bravery, carry any thing away with them; so is it here: the world is God's great house, richly furnished, and we well entertained in it: we have all things liberally afforded us for our use; but nothing of all is ours. And, therefore, God hath set that grim porter, Death, at his gate; to see, that, as we brought nothing into it, so we carry nothing out of it.

What a sad parting-hour will it be to the soul, when it must go into another world, and leave all that it admired and loved, behind in this! How will it protract, and linger! How loth will it be to enter upon so great a journey, and carry nothing to defray the charges of it! Certainly, dying must needs be a terrible thing, to those, who have gotten nothing but what they can no longer keep, when their souls must be set on shore in a vast and black eternity, all naked and destitute, having nothing to relieve or support them.

(3.) *The Necessities of the soul, are altogether of another kind, than those, which worldly things are able to supply: and therefore they are wholly unsuitable.*

Natural things may well serve for natural wants: food will satisfy hunger, and raiment fence off the injuries of the weather, and riches will procure both: but the soul's necessities are spiritual, and these no natural thing can reach. It wants a price, to redeem it: nothing can do this, but the precious blood of Christ. It wants pardon and forgiveness: nothing can grant it, but the free and abundant mercy of God. It wants sanctification and holiness, comfort and assurance: nothing can effect these, but the Holy Ghost. Here, all worldly things fall short. The exigencies of the outward man they may supply; but the greatest abundance of them can never quiet a troubled conscience, nor appease an angry God, nor remove the condemning guilt of the least sin: no, *the redemption of the soul is precious* (more precious than to be purchased by these poor things) *and it ceaseth for ever:* Psal. xlix. 8.

Possibly, now, in the time of your peace and prosperity, you regard not these spiritual wants; but, when the days of sorrow and darkness shall come upon you, when God shall drop into your consciences a little of his wrath and displeasure, you may as well seek to cure a wound in your body, by applying a plaster to your garment, as seek to ease a wounded spirit by all the treasures, pleasures, and enjoyments of this world. *Riches,* saith the wise man, Prov. xi. 4, *profit not in the day of wrath:* for, indeed, they cannot reach the soul, to bring any true solace to it.

Thus you see how unsuitable the world is to the soul: unsuitable to the Nature of it, for the soul is spiritual, but all earthly enjoyments are drossy and material; the soul is immortal, but these are all perishing: unsuitable also to the Necessities of the soul, which they can never reach nor supply.

9. The Vanity of the World appears in its INCONSTANCY and FICKLENESS.

God's providence administers all things here below, in perpetual vicissitudes. His hand turns them about, like so many wheels: to which they are compared; Ezek. i. The same part is now uppermost; and, anon, lowermost: now, lifted up in the air and, by and by, grated through the mire. This is the mutable condition of the world. And therefore, we find it compared to the moon Rev. xii. 1; where the Church is described to be *clothed with the sun, and to have the moon*, that is, the world, *under her feet*. And well may it bear the resemblance: for it is still waxing and waning; sometimes full of brightness, at other times scarce a small streak of light to be discerned.

There are none of us, but have had experience, in some kind or other, of the inconstancy of these sublunary enjoyments.

When the sun shines bright and warm, all the flowers of the field open and display their leaves, to receive him into their bosoms; but, when night comes, they fold together, and shut up all their glories: and, though they were like so many little suns shining here below, able, one would think, to force a day for themselves; yet, when the sun withdraws his beams, they droop, and hang the head, and stand neglected, dull and obscure things. So hath it fared with us: while God hath shone upon us with warm and cherishing influences, we opened, and spread, and flourished into a great pomp and glory; but he only hides his face, draws in his beams, and all our beautiful leaves shut up, or fall to the ground, and leave us a bare stalk, poor and contemptible.

Or, if there have been no such considerable mutations in what concerns us, yet the revolutions, that God hath of late years brought upon others, so beyond expectation or example, may well instruct us in the Vanity of the World; and make us no less contemn it, than admire that Infinite Wisdom that governs it.

It is said of the wheels, Ezek. i. 17; that *they went upon their four sides:* for, one wheel intersecting and crossing another, the whole must needs consist of four sides or semicircles; and moving upon these four sides, it must of necessity move very ruggedly, by jolts and jerks. So, truly, the Providences of God do sometimes

move unevenly; as cross wheels would do, moving upon their sides Great and sudden changes are often brought to pass, without being ripened by sensible degrees: but happen by the surprisal of some unexpected Providence: and, as it were, by the sudden jerk of the wheel, shaking off those who sat on the top, and crushing them in its passage over

'Tis true, these mutations which to us seem so confused and tumultuary, are all orderly and harmonious in the divine counsel and foreknowledge. There is not a Providence, that breaks its rank; nor a wheel, that moves out of its track: and there is a destined end for them all, the Glory of the Almighty Creator; to which, while every creature pursues its own inclinations, he sweetly and yet efficaciously sways them. They are like arrows, shot at a mark by an unerring hand: some are shot point-blank, and some by compass; but none so carelessly as to miss it.

Though changes may surprise us, yet they do not surprise God: but, as it is a great pleasure to us, to see our designs and forecasts accomplished; so, Infinite Wisdom delights itself to look on, and see how all things start up into their place and order, as soon as called forth by his efficacious decree and foreknowledge. Among all the weighty and arduous cares of governing the world, it is, if I may so express it, the Recreation of Providence, to amuse mankind with some wonderful events: that, when we cannot find out the connection and dependence of Second Causes, we may humbly acquiesce in adoring the absolute sovereignty of the First: and, by observing the mutations of affairs here below, may be taught to repose ourselves in Him who only is immutable. Thus God administers the various occurrences of the world, according to the counsel of his own will; and makes the inconstancy of it serve both for his delight and our admonition.

It is in vain, therefore, to expect happiness from what is so uncertain. All the comforts of it are but like fading flowers, that, while we are looking on them and smelling to them, die and wither in our hands.

Is it Pleasures we seek? These must vary: for where there is not an intermission, it is not pleasure, but a glut and surfeit. And hence it is, that they who are used to hardships, taste more sweetness in some ordinary pleasures: than those, who are accustomed to a voluptuous life, do in all their exquisite and invented delights.

Do you pursue Honour and Applause in the world? This hangs upon the wavering tongues of the multitude. To follow this, is but to pursue a puff of wind; and, of all winds in nature,

the most fickle and changeable. The people's *Hosanna* and *Crucify*, are oft pronounced in the same breath. And, besides that it is no great matter that those should think or speak well of thee, who have but too much reason to think ill of themselves; * besides this, consider how soon public fame grows out of breath. Possibly an age or two may talk of thee; but this bruit is but like successive echoes, that render the voice still weaker and weaker, till at length it vanisheth into silence. Yea, couldst thou fill whole chronicles with thy story, yet time or moths will eat thee out: and the fresher remembrance of other men's actions will bury thine in oblivion. †

Is it Riches you desire? These, too, are uncertain: 1 Tim. vi. 17. *Charge them, that they trust not in uncertain riches.* Uncertain they are in getting; and uncertain in keeping, when got. All our treasures are like quicksilver, which strangely slips between our fingers, when we think we hold it fastest. *Riches*, saith the Wise Man, *make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven:* Prov. xxiii. 5: and it were a most strange folly, to fall passionately in love with a bird upon his wing, who is free and unconfined as the air in which he flies, and will not stoop to thy call or lure. ‡ How much better were it, since they will fly, for thyself to direct their flight towards heaven, by relieving the necessitous servants and members of Jesus Christ! Then will their flight be happy and glorious, when they carry on their wings the prayers and blessings of the poor, whose bowels thou hast refreshed. This is to lay up treasure in heaven; to remit thy monies to the other world, where they shall be truly paid thee, with abundant interest. This is to lay up a stock for hereafter, that thou mayest have whereon to live splendidly and gloriously to all eternity. And, thus to lay out, is to lay up, to lay up uncertain riches in a safe depository: God's promises shall be thy security, and every star in heaven a seal set upon the treasury-door, which none can break or violate.

Thus you see how mutable and inconstant all worldly things are. So that we may truly apply that, which the Psalmist speaks of the earth in another sense, That *God hath founded it upon the sea,*

* Επαινειϑαι ϑελεις ὑπο ανϑρωπϖ, τρις της ὡρας εαυτῳ καταρωμενϖ. Ant. l. s. 53.

† Ὡς αἱ ϑινες αλλαι επ' αλλαις επιφορημεναι κρυπτουσι τα προτερα, ουτως εν τω βιω τα προτερα ὑπο των επενεχθεντων ταχεως εκαλυφϑη. Id. l. vii. s. 34.

‡ Ὡσπερ ει τις τι των παραπετομενων ϱᾳϑιων φιλειν αρχοιτο, το δ' ηδη εξ οφϑαλμων απεληλυϑεν. Id. lib. vi. s. 15. The same with that of Solomon: *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that, which is not?* &c.

and established it upon the floods: Psalm xxiv. 2. Such is the waving and fluctuation of all things here below, that they are no more constant, than if they were merely built upon the ebbing and flowing of the tide

10. The Vanity of the World appears in this, THAT IT IS ALTOGETHER UNSATISFACTORY.

That must needs be vain, which when we enjoy it in its greatest abundance, can give us no real nor solid content. Such an empty thing is the whole world. You may as soon grasp a bundle of dreams, or take up an armfull of your own shadow, as fill the vast and boundless desires of your souls with these earthly enjoyments.

And, therefore, the Psalmist, speaking of prosperous sinners, sets forth their state by the most thin and empty things imaginable: Psal lxxiii. 20; "*As a dream, when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.*" The images and representations, that a dream makes, seem very brisk and lively; but, when we reflect upon them with our waking thoughts, we find them confused and impertinent. Such is all the prosperity of this world: it is but as the image and fiction of a dream.

As a hungry man, (Isaiah xxix. 8,) that dreams he is at a furnished table, and fills himself with all varieties of delicates, how joyful and how pleased is he, how fully satisfied, if he were not to wake again! but some one jogs or calls him: he wakes, and finds himself hunger-starved: nothing fed, but his fancy. So is it with us in this world. While the soul lies under the coverlet of this body, it sleeps: and one thinks himself rich; another, great and noble; a third, learned and wise: but, alas! all this is only a dream: when either afflictions or death make a noise and call upon him, the sleepy soul awakes; and finds itself empty and hunger-starved, after all the imaginary store it enjoyed.

Now, the Unsatisfactoriness of the World, may be clearly evinced by these two things.

(1) *In that the highest condition we can attain unto, cannot free us from cares and crosses.* Yea indeed it is so far from freeing us, that it rather increaseth them. It doth but make us spread the wider, and stand the fairer mark for trouble.

And yet we are like children, that think the sky lies on yonder hill: thither they run, hoping to touch it there: when they come, they find it dislodged to another hill: after it they run, and pursue it from hill to hill; and, after all their pains and sweat, find themselves as far below it as at first. So it fares with us. We think happiness, and true content lie in some condition above

us: thither we hasten, hoping we shall reach them there. When we arrive thither, we find the happiness we sought for is dislodged, and seems to us to rest in a condition above that; but, when we attain this too, still we are as far below happinesss and satisfaction, as we were in our lowest estate.

When we change our outward condition, be it to never so great advantage, we do not lose, but only change our cares. If we are freed from the cares and crosses of a poor and private life, we fall into those of a pompous and envied greatness, which are both more numerous and more oppressive. The man, that lies most compacted and in least compass in the world, is like to escape best: whereas the great ones, that take up much room, do only show in how many places and concernments they are liable to be wounded. *

It is not, therefore, any thing in this world, that can give you satisfaction. All the enjoyments of it are to the soul, as wind to the stomach: they may gripe it; but they can never satisfy it. Indeed, so vain are they, that they scarce have any other proof of their reality, but the pain and torment they bring with them.

(2) The world appears to be unsatisfactory, *in that, be our condition what it will, yet still we desire change.* We can no more rest in a high estate, than in a low; but still we desire something further, and something better.

As sick men toss to and fro, † from side to side, thinking to find ease, by changing their posture; whereas it is not their outward posture, but their inward distemper, that is the cause of their restlessness: so do we endeavour to change and shift conditions in the world, and lie sometimes in one posture and sometimes in another, but yet are restless in all; for, wheresoever we tumble, we carry our disease with us, false opinions, and foolish hopes, and impotent desires, and fond designs, which make us complain of our present state, and wish the amendment of that, when nothing wants cure but ourselves.

The servant thinks he shall be a happy man, when he is made free. Is the free man happy? No: but he shall be, when he

* *Angustanda sunt patrimonia, ut minùs ad injurias fortunæ simus expositi. Habiliora sunt corpora in bello, quæ in arma sua contrahi possunt, quàm quæ superfunduntur, et undique magnitudo sua vulneribus objicit.* Sen. de Tranq. c. 8. *Cogendæ in arctum res sunt, ut telum in vanum cadat.* Id. c. 9.

† Ὥσπερ οἱ δειλοι και ναυτιωντες εν τω πλειν, ειτα βαον οιομενοι διαξειν εαν εις γαυλον εξ ακατου, και παλιν εαν εις τριηρη μεταβωσιν, ουδεν περαινουσι, την χολην και την δειλιαν συμμεταφεροντες ἑαυτοις· οὑτως αἱ των βιων αυτιμεταληψεις ουκ εξαιρουσι της ψυχης τα λυπουντα και ταραττοντα ταυτα δε εχιν απειρια των πραγματων, αλογιστια, το μη δυνασθαι μηδ' επισασθαι χρησθαι τοις παρουσιν ορθως. Plut. de Tranquil. Anim. iii.

hath gotten such an estate. Is the rich man happy? No: but he shall be, when he is invested with such an honour and dignity. Well: is the honourable man happy? No: unless he be supreme. And those, who are supreme, cannot think themselves completely happy, unless they be universal monarchs. And those who were so, we find they could not rest there, but would needs be adored for gods. Oh, whither do the boundless desires of men hurry them!* Nothing in this world can put a stop to them.

It was a pertinent discorse of Cineas, dissuading Pyrrhus from undertaking a war against the Romans. "Sir," saith he,† "When you have conquered them, what will you do next?" "Then Sicily is near at hand, and easy to master." "And what when you have subdued Sicily?" "Then we'll pass over to Africa, and take Carthage which cannot long withstand us." "When these are conquered, what will be your next attempt?" "Then," saith Pyrrhus, "we'll fall in upon Greece and Macedon, and recover what we have lost there." "Well, when all are subdued, what fruit do you expect from all your victories?" "Then," saith he, "we'll sit down and enjoy ourselves." "Sir," replies Cineas, "may we not do it now? Have you not already a kingdom of your own? and he, that cannot enjoy himself with a kingdom, cannot with the whole world."

Such are the designs of men, and so we may answer them. Most are projecting how they may get such an estate; then how they may raise themselves to honour: and think that their advancement in both, will bring them satisfaction. Alas! this will not do. Their desires will still run before them: and they may as well sit down content where they are, as where they hope to be.

And the reason of this unsatisfactoriness in worldly things, is, because none of them are so good as the soul is. The soul, next to angels, is the very top and cream of the whole creation: other things are but dregs and lees compared to it. Now that, which is our happiness, must be better than ourselves; for it must perfect us. But these things being far worse and inferior, the soul, in cleaving to them, is secretly conscious that it abaseth and disparageth itself; and therefore cannot find true satisfaction.

Nothing can fill the soul, but that, which eminently contains in it all good. But now, as light is only divided and parcelled out

* Οἱ δεδεμενοι ενδαιμονιζουσι τους λελυμενους, εκεινοι δε τους ελευθερους· οὗ δε ελευθεροι τους πολιτας, οὗτοι δε παλιν αυ τους πλουσιους· οἱ δε πλουσιοι τους σατραπας· οἱ δε σατραπαι τους βασιλεις· οἱ δε βασιλεις τους θεους, μονονυχι βρονταν και αστραπτειν ἐθελοντες. Ειτα ουτως αει των ὑπερ ἑαυτους ενδεεις οντες, ουδεποτε τοις καθ' ἑαυτους χαριν εχουσιν, &c. Plut. Ib. x.

† Plutarch. in Vita Pyrrhi.

among the stars, but is all united in the sun; so goodness is only parcelled out among the creatures: this creature hath one share, and that another: not any of them contains the whole sum of goodness: this is proper to God only, who is the Author and Original of them all; in whom all excellencies and perfections are concentred: and, therefore, in him alone can be found that rest and satisfaction, which the soul in vain seeks for, in any thing besides himself.

These are the Demonstrations of the World's Vanity; which, though they may be many and various, yet I doubt not but every man's particular experience may furnish him with divers others.

III. But, whatever our Observations are, the USES we may make of them are these.

1. It should teach us TO ADMIRE AND ADORE THE GOOD PROVIDENCE OF GOD TO HIS CHILDREN, IN SO ORDERING IT, THAT THE WORLD SHOULD BE THUS VAIN, AND DEAL SO ILL WITH THOSE WHO SERVE IT.

For, if it were not so infamous and deceitful as it is; if it did not frustrate and disappoint our hopes; and pay us with vexation, when it promiseth fruition and content: what thinkest thou, O Christian, would be the end of this? would any one think of God, or remember heaven and the life to come? St. Augustine somewhere speaks excellently, *Turbat me mundus, et ego eum diligo: quid si non turbaret?* "The world troubles and molests me, and yet I love it: what if it did not trouble me?" Certainly, we should fall into an utter forgetfulness of God, if we could find any true satisfaction here. We should never think of returning to *the Fountain of Living Waters*, if we could find enough in cisterns to quench the thirst of our souls.

And, therefore, God deals with us, as some great person would do with a disobedient son, that forsakes his house, and riots among his tenants: his father gives order; they should treat him ill, affront, and chase him from them; and all, that he might reduce him. The same doth God. Man is his wild and debauched son. He flies from the commands of his father, and cannot endure to live under his strict and severe government. Whither goes he, but to the pleasures of the world; and revels and riots among the creatures? but God resolves to recover him; and, therefore, commands every creature to handle him roughly. "Burn him, Fire: toss him, Tempests; and shipwreck his estate: forsake him Friends: Designs, fail him: Children, be rebellious to him, as he is to me: let his supports and dependances sink under him: his riches melt away, leave him poor, and despised, and destitute." These are all God's servants, and must obey his will. And to what end is all this; but that, seeing himself forsaken of all, he may at length, like the beggar prodigal, return again to his father?

2. If the Vanity of the World be such, and so great; if it be only an empty bubble, a swelling nothing, less solid than a dream or a shadow; if it be thus unsuitable, uncertain, and unsatisfactory, as I have demonstrated to you: WHAT GROSS FOLLY THEN ARE MOST MEN GUILTY OF IN SETTING SO HIGH A PRICE UPON THAT, WHICH IS OF NO WORTH NOR SUBSTANCE?

Though formerly we have been so much deceived as to take the world's paint and varnish for true beauty, and its glittering for substantial treasure; yet now, since the cheat is discovered, since you have seen this false pack opened and nothing but counterfeit wares obtruded upon you, your folly will be inexcusable, if, after experiments and admonitions, you should contribute any longer to your own cheat, and set a price upon things which you know to be vile and worthless.

The wise man, as you have heard, sums up their whole value, only in a great cypher and a great blot, *Vanity*, and *Vexation*. At what price would you rate *Vanity*, which is nothing? or *Vexation*, which is worse than nothing?

And, therefore, our Saviour, Mark iv. 7; compares the things of this world to *thorns: some fell among thorns:* which thorns he interprets to be *the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches:* v. 19. Now, he were a madman, that, to assuage his hunger, would attempt to swallow a bush of thorns. No less is the madness and extreme folly of most men, who, to satisfy the eager appetite of a hungry and indigent soul, gape after the thorns of this world, and chew thistles; which, instead of yielding them either grapes or figs, will only serve to pierce them through with innumerable sorrows.

A man's wisdom or folly is commonly judged by the bargains he makes. If he lay out that, which is very precious, to purchase what is of no worth, this we justly account a foolish bargain. If, on the other hand, he purchase that, which is of great price, with something little worth, we account it a wise and thriving bargain. Now here we may see the gross folly of most men. Though they are wise enough, in bartering one part of the world for another; yet they shew themselves very fools, in purchasing any part of the world with that which is no part of it.

The Scripture hath told us, that all that is in the world, is honour, pleasure, or profit. While we only traffic with these for one another, we do not amiss. The world is a proper price for itself. And, doubtless, we may lawfully part with some worldly advantages to procure others. But, then, there are other things, which do not belong to the world, under this acceptation: our affections;

our consciences; our precious and immortal souls. And these God hath given us to trade with for heaven and eternal glory. Now herein lies the folly of most men, that they purchase the vile things of this world, with such an inestimable price; and extravagantly outbid themselves, to procure trifles with that, which might procure them eternal happiness. More particularly.

(1.) Is it not extreme folly, *to lavish out precious affections, upon vile and vain objects?*

Affections are the wings of the soul, without which the soul itself, were but a dull and unactive carcase. These God hath given it, that it might be able to take its flight to heaven, and lodge itself in his bosom. Now, how unworthy a thing is it, only to flutter to and fro upon the surface of the earth; to clog and clotter these wings with mire and dirt, which were at first made to take so high and so noble a flight!

The Apostle hath commanded us to *set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth:* Col. iii. 2. And, indeed, there is great reason for it. For the two choice affections of the soul are Love and Joy. Now that is most worthy our love, that can return a joy most worthy of us. But the joy, that the world gives, is usually tumultuous, always checked with some secret annoy, and it ends with a dulness and damp upon the spirits: it is but like the empty *crackling of thorns under a pot,* * that for the present makes a great noise and blaze, but suddenly vanisheth all away into smoke. Whereas, a heavenly Christian feels sometimes a ponderous and weighty joy; a joy springing up in his soul, almost intolerable, and altogether unutterable; a joy, that melts him into ecstasy and rapture. How infinitely doth he then disdain, that any soul should be so wretchedly sottish, as to prefer the world before, or equalize it with God! He thinks the happiness he then enjoys so great, that, although he believes it is, yet he cannot conceive how it should be more or greater in heaven itself. Then the soul claps its wings: it would fain take its flight, and be gone: it breathes, it pants, it reaches after God, and falls into an agony of joy and desire inconceivably mixed together. Can the world give us any such over-powering joy as this? It may afford us corn and wine; the weak recruits of a frail life: but, when it hath emptied all its store and abundance into our bosoms, it is not worthy to be mentioned with the love and favour of God, which is *better than life*: Psal. lxiii. 3. And, therefore, the Psalmist makes it his prayer,

* Eccles. vii. 6. *Flamma stipulâ exorta, claro crepitu, largo fulgore, cito incremento; sed enim materiâ levi, caduco incendio, nullis reliquiis.* Apul. Apol.

Psal. iv. 6, 7 ; LORD, *lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.*

The joy of the world resembles a torrent. As, upon a glut of rain, you shall have a torrent come rolling along with noise and violence, overflowing its banks, and bearing all before it; yet it is but muddy and impure water, and 'tis soon gone and dried up: such is all the joy this world can give: it makes a great noise, 'tis commonly immoderate, and swells beyond its due bounds; yet 'tis but a muddy and impure joy; it soon rolls away, and leaves nothing behind but a drought in the soul. Now, since the world's joy is but such a poor empty thing as this, it is most gross folly for us to lay out our best love upon that, which cannot repay us with the best joy.

(2.) If the world be thus vain, what folly is it, *to lay out our most serious cares and contrivances upon it!*

The cares of worldly men are most absurd and irrational. Ask them why they care; they will tell you it is, that they may live without care: and, yet, the more they get, the more do their cares swarm and increase about them. To what purpose do they thus disquiet themselves? They were as good to make nets to catch the wind, as to lay plots either to obtain or secure a world, which is so slippery and so full of disappointments, that neither they who have it, are sure of keeping it, nor they who have it not of getting it.

We may observe a kind of coyness in the world. Those, who court it most and pursue it closest, ofttimes miss of their designs, because they overact them. And, it is commonly seen, that those, who, as we use to say, have many irons in the fire, get nothing thereby, but only the burning of their own fingers.

'Tis true, there is a prudential and providential care, that is so far from being chargeable with folly, that it is necessary, and a great part of our duty; not only as we are men, but as we are Christians; 1 Tim. v. 8. And this prudential care is, when we do what lawfully we may to procure the comforts of life; and, then, with all quietness and indifferency, submit the success to God. This is a Care of Diligence.

But that, which is justly branded with folly, is a Care of Diffidence; which is always accompanied with torment, fears, and distractions about the success and issue; and most unreasonably vexeth us, for what is not in our power to determine. Such a care as this usurps upon God. And, certainly, it is no less a fault to invade God's part, than to neglect our own; and a like folly.

The right temper a Christian should observe in procuring any worldly comfort, is, to interest his judgment in the choice of means, but to keep his affections disinterested and unconcerned in the event. But, when we are anxious how our designs will succeed, we make it a torment to us in getting, before we can make it a comfort to us in enjoying.

To what purpose, then, dost thou, O Worldling, rack thy brains with contrivances, how to fill thy bags with treasure, how to empty them out with advantage? When thou hast added heap to heap, of all thy store thou enjoyest no more, than what thou eatest, or drinkest, or wearest. And, of this too, thou enjoyest no more, than will just suffice to satisfy thy hunger, to quench thy thirst, and to fence off the injuries of the weather: all the rest turns either to diseases or burdens.

True reason will teach us to choose our estates, as we would do our garments: not those, which are largest; but those, which are fittest for us.*

Vast and overflowing estates are but like huge enormous rudders, that rather serve to sink the ship, than steer it. Their abundance is useless, and their excess dangerous.

To what end, therefore, is all our care and carking, all our perplexing and solicitous thoughts; those parching and consuming distractions, which can hasten on nothing but our own natural decays: to what end are they, unless it be to contradict our Saviour, and shew that we have a power to make *our black hairs white?* Matt. v. 36.

When we lay subtle and intricate designs, to obtain the things of this world, we are but like spiders, that, with a great deal of art and labour, weave a curious cobweb, only to catch flies; and, possibly, spend more of their bowels in framing it, than the prey they catch can again repair: yea, and it may be too, before the prey be caught, both they and their web are swept down together and trod in the dust.

So, when we frame designs, to get any worldly advantage, it is but taking a great deal of pains to catch a fly: and, possibly, before it be caught, the rude hand of death wraps us about in our cobweb, and sweeps us down into the grave; and, *in that very moment, we and all our well-laid projects perish together:* Ps. cxlvi. 4.

* *Fortuna, velut tunica, magis concinna quàm longa probanda: quippe etiam ea, si non gestetur et trahatur, nihilo minùs quàm lacinia præpendens impedit et præcipitat. Etenim in omnibus ad vitæ munia utendis, quicquid aptum moderatione u supergreditur oneri potius quàm usui exuberat.* Apul. Apol.

(3) If the world be thus vain, what extreme and prodigious folly is it, *to take as much pains to secure the poor and perishing concernments of it, as would suffice to secure heaven and eternal glory, were they laid out that way!*

We labour for the bread that perisheth, and we perish with it in our very mouths. About this, are our hearts, our hands, our strength, our time employed: whereas the great things of eternity are so utterly neglected by us, as if they were none of our concernments to look after. Were we but as laborious in our Christian Calling, as we commonly are in our Worldly Callings, salvation would not lie upon our hands unwrought; God, and Christ, and all heaven were ours.

Who would doubt, when they see men so busy about impertinencies, and the trivial affairs of this world, but that they were much more anxious about their souls? Who would not conclude, that certainly their great work is already done, that shall see them so earnest and solicitous about petty matters? But, alas! it may astonish men and angels, that rational creatures, who have immortal souls, souls whose endless duration must abide either in inconceivable misery or bliss, should trifle away that time and strength which might secure their everlasting happiness, about those vain, nothings, that have neither happiness in them nor continuance.

Certainly, the service of God is not more painful than the drudgery of the world: and, sure I am, it is far more cleanly. Thou shalt not in his service set thy hand to any foul office: whereas, the World employs thee basely to rake together thick clay, and load thyself with it; and the Devil, yet worse to rake in the mire and filth of all manner of defilements, which now pollute the soul, and will hereafter damn it. Both these are most grievous taskmasters.

Some "*draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope:*" Isa. v. 18. They are so enslaved to the work of the Devil, that he puts them into his team, makes them draw and strain for their iniquities, and doth them a courtesy when their sins come easily. He makes them toil and sweat, in carrying fagots to their own fire; and blowing up those flames, which must for ever burn them.

Others, as the Prophet expresseth it, Hab. ii. 13; *labour in the very fire, and weary themselves for very vanity.* They take great pains in the World, and meet with great disappointments: for both are signified by *labouring in the fire;* where what they produce cannot be enjoyed, but is consumed between their hands.

Since, then, you must take so much pains, either for Sin or Vanity, why will you not be persuaded rather to lay it out upon that, which is substantially good and eternally so? God requires not more, but only other work from you. And the *many things* that Martha was *careful about*, religion and holiness reduceth to the *one thing necessary;* which, though it contains many particular duties under it, yet by reason of its uniformity and subserviency to itself, is less distracting and cumbersome. The wheels of a watch move and click as fast, when it goes false, as when it goes true: and, if it be but set right at first, the same activity of the spring will so continue it, which before made its motion irregular. So it is here. The same activity and industry which you irregularly use in pursuit of the world, would procure heaven and glory for you, were it that way directed. Your cares, your contrivances, your endeavours, need be no more than now they are: only, what before you laid out upon the world, reserve now for heaven. And how infinitely reasonable is this! Certainly, they are most stupidly foolish, that will take up vanity at as dear a rate as happiness; and give as much for vexation, as for Endless Joy.

(4) If the things of this world be so vain, what inexcusable folly is it, *to part with the peace or the purity of our consciences for them!*

And, yet, what more common? If men can get any thing of the world at the price of a sin, they think they have made a gainful bargain.

And, therefore, the Devil hath recourse to this, as his most prevailing temptation. When he set on our Saviour in the Wilderness the last assault was, "*All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me:*" Matt. iv. 9. And when this battery could not make a breach, he raiseth his siege, as desparing of success.

And this is the usual temptation by which he assaults others. Judas comes with his *quid dabitis?* "*What will ye give me;*" Matt. xxvi. 15; and sets Christ and his own conscience to sale, for the inconsiderable sum of *thirty pieces.* He demands no more than the common market price of a slave; Exod. xxi. 32; (not amounting to above eight and thirty shillings *) for the Lord of Life and Glory; and thinks his bargain so good, that he gives himself to the Devil for vantage!

This is the very root of all that injustice, and rapine, and oppression, and violence, that is to be found among men. They all strive and tug, who shall get most of this earth from one another; and lose heaven and their own consciences, in the scuffle.

* Accounting the value of the common shekel to be fifteen pence of our money.

This is it, that makes men so oft shift their sails, that they may run before every wind that blows. If times grow rough and tempestuous and they must throw overboard, either their gain or their godliness; this persuades them to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, only that they may bear up in this world, though they sink hereafter.

Now, what deplorable folly is this! When thy conscience is disquieted with the tormenting review of past crimes, what will all thy ill-gotten wealth avail thee? Thou wilt then, with extreme horror, cast thine eyes upon all thy treasures of wickedness, when conscience shall tell thee, thou hast not only treasured up them, but wrath too against the day of wrath.

(5.) What desperate folly is it, *to purchase a vain world, with the loss of our precious souls!*

So our Saviour, Matt. xvi. 26. *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Oh, think what great losers they must needs be, who lose their souls, to gain the world; and must at last lose the world too, together with their souls!

This is the only thing that damns men; that they prefer the pleasures, honours, profits, and pitiful nothings of this world, before their precious and immortal souls, which are more worth than ten thousand worlds. What is this, but a stupidity as gross as that of the old heathens, to make a vile worm our god, and sacrifice an ox to it; or a monster our god, and sacrifice a man to it?

Think how dreadful and grating will be the reflections of worldlings in hell, to consider that there they must lie and burn to eternity, for their inordinate love to that world, of which they have nothing left them, besides the bitter remembrance. What will it then avail them, that they have lived here in ease and delights; when all their mirth shall be turned into groans and howlings? What will all their treasures and riches avail them; when these shall be melted down about them, to increase their torment?

Believe it, it is sad to be left to the conviction of that day, when the Vanity of Earth shall appear in the Torments of Hell.

Be persuaded, therefore, as you have renounced it in all its pomps and vanities, when you gave up your names to Christianity, so to renounce it likewise in your lives: habitually, at all times, by sitting loose from it, and living above it; and actually, whensoever God calls for any of your temporal enjoyments, that is, when you cannot keep them without wounding your consciences and hazarding your souls.

3. Another Use may be this. If the world be thus vain and empty, WHY THEN SHOULD WE PRIDE OURSELVES IN OR PRIZE OURSELVES BY ANY POOR ENJOYMENTS OF IT?

How foolish is it, to account thyself a better man than another, only because thy dung-hill is a little bigger than his! These things are not at all to be reckoned into the value and worth of a man. They are all without thee; and concern thee, no more than fine clothes do the health or strength of the Body. It is wealth indeed that makes all the noise and bustle in the world, and challengeth all the respect and honour to itself; and the ignorant vulgar, whose eyes are dazzled with pomp and bravery, pay it with a stupid and astonished reverence. Yet know, that it is but thy silks and velvet, thy lands, or thy retinue and servants they venerate; not thee: and, if thou thinkest otherwise, thou art as justly ridiculous, as that ass in the apologue, that grew very gravely proud and took state, when the people fell prostrate before him; adoring, not him, but the idol he carried.

Those things, which belong to the perfection of a man, are all within him: knowledge, and wisdom, and temperance, a serene mind, and calm affections, an inflexible virtue, and a soul constant and true to itself in all occurrences. Give me such an one, that can stand firm and unshaken upon his own basis, when the whole world totters; that knows what is just and honest, and dares do it; that is master of his own passions, and scorns to be a slave to another's: such a one in his rags and poverty, is a far better man than those gay things, who owe all their parts and wisdom and virtue to their rentals, and whose tenants and stewards bring them in the yearly revenue of their reputation. But, then, suppose this excellent person endowed with divine grace, and the true fear and love of God, and this will exalt him above the highest and greatest of other men, as far as they themselves are above the vilest of beasts.

Solomon tells us, Prov. x. 20, *that the heart of the wicked is little worth.* It is of no price nor value. And shall his estate be, when his heart is not?

Indeed, nothing makes us rich as Men, but wisdom and virtue; nor as Christians, but piety and holiness. And, in these, which are the only true and substantial riches the poorest Christian may vie stakes with all the world. Drop millions of gold, boundless revenues, ample territories, crowns, and scepters, and a poor contemptible Christian lays his one God against all these, and beggars them.

4. If the world and all the enjoyments of it be thus vain, this

should FORTIFY US AGAINST THE FEAR OF DEATH;* which can deprive us of nothing, but what is both vain and vexatious.

Life is nothing else, but a huddle of business; a great swarm of employments, that have more stings in them, than honey. If we be great, we are but the larger hives for Cares: if honourable, we are but raised above others to be the more weather-beaten. A high degree in this world doth but shelter other men's cares under our wings; and adopt other men's troubles, as a wretched supplement to our own. If our estate be mean and low, as it exposeth us to contempt and injuries; so it engageth us to rescue ourselves from the pressures of poverty, by our own sweat and industry. Those few things, that are necessary to a comfortable subsistence in the world, will yet cost us care and labour, an aching heart, and a weary hand: and this turns our bread into stones, and our fish into scorpions. If we have too much business in the world, our callings become a burden or temptation to us: and if we have none, we become a burden to ourselves and to others. God hath written vanity and vexation upon every condition: and, if his providence create not troubles for us, yet our own folly will. Thus hath man made himself a slave and drudge to the world, over which God hath made him lord.

Why then should Death be so terrible, which comes only to ease us of our burden, to stroke the sweat from our brows, and to give us a profound rest from all our labours in the bed of the grave? *There,* as Job saith, *the weary be at rest:* Job. iii. 17: and all cares and troubles vanish, as soon as our heads touch that pillow. *There is no work, nor device, in the grave, whither we are going;* but a deep repose, a secure retirement, where none of the vexations of this life shall ever find us.

And, as it frees us from all the Cares, so from all the Sorrows of this world. What is our life, but a bubble? Our sighs are the air, and our tears the water, that makes it. The first possession that we take of this world, is by crying: and there is nothing in it, that we hold by a surer tenure than our griefs. Tears are the inheritance of our eyes: either our sins call for them, or our sufferings; and nothing can dry them up, but the dust of the grave. Sometimes, we lose a friend, or near relation: the tribute we owe their memory must be paid down in tears. Sometimes, their

* Μαλιστα σὲ ευκυλον προς τον θανατον ποιησει ἡ επιστασις ἡ επι τα ὑποκειμενα ὧν μελλεις ἀφιστασθαι. Anton. l. ix. s. 3. *A malis mors abducit, non à bonis, verum si quærimus. Hoc quidem à Cyrenaico Hegesia sic copiosè disputatur, ut is à rege Ptolemæo prohibitus esse dicatur illa in scholis dicere, quòd multi, his auditis, mortem sibi ipsi consciscerent.* Cic. Tus. Quæst. l. i. c. 34.

ungodly practices torment us, when, by their lewdness and debaucheries, they are lost both to their own interests and our hopes. Sometimes, compassion of other men's sufferings affects us with a tender sorrow; and, as if we had not grief enough spring up out of our own bowels, we call in foreign succours to augment the score. And, many times, tedious and lingering sicknesses waste us; grinding pains rack and torture us, which were far the more intolerable, but that they hasten on that death, that puts an end and period to all a Christian's miseries. We are not concerned in the grave, at the loss of some friends, nor the evil courses of others; what calamities befal the world, or those whom we loved dearest in it. There it troubles us not, though preferment go by the merit of flattery and baseness; while the generous and gallant soul, starves through the mere rigour of his virtue. It concerns us nothing, what stinking breath blasts our good name; or what unworthy foot treads upon our grave. Here, a little pain molests us; but there whole limbs rot, and fall off, and crumble into dust, without at all disturbing that quiet rest, that buries all the cares and sorrows of this life in silence and oblivion.

Where then is the dreadfulness of Death, which only frees us from the Troubles and Crosses of a wretched life? It is unreasonable to complain of that change, which delivers us from a world, of which we are still complaining: and it is childish to quarrel at that hand, which undresses us, and strips off our uneasy garments, only to lay us to sleep.

5. If the world be so vain and empty, we may LEARN TO BE WELL CONTENTED WITH OUR PRESENT STATE AND CONDITION, WHATSOEVER IT BE.

It hath been fully demonstrated, that there can be no complete satisfaction in any estate. And why, then, should we desire change? The great ground of discontent, is, not our Wants, but our Desires. There is scarce any condition in the world so low, but may satisfy our Wants: and there is no condition so high, as can satisfy our Desires.* If we live according to the law of nature and reason, we shall never be poor; but, if we live according to fond opinion and fancy, we shall never be rich. That, which we have, be it never so little, is full as satisfactory, as that, which we hope for, be it never so great: for *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit,* is passed upon all that is in the world, whether it be more or less.

* Ουδεις δε εστι πενης εις τα αναγκαια. Clem. Alex. Pæd. l. ii. c. 2.
Quod satiare potest dives natura ministrat.
Quod docet infrænis gloria fine caret. Petr.

And, therefore, O Christian, thou mayest well bear a narrow stint in the things of this world. If God reduce thee to a morsel of bread and a cup of water, it is enough: this will suffice to bear thy charges to heaven; or, if this too should fail, thy journey will only be the shorter. Possibly God keeps thee short in vanities, that he might bestow upon thee that which is a solid and substantial good.

The Psalmist tells us, Psalm lxviii. 19, that God *daily loadeth us with benefits.* Though some may have more than others, yet every one hath his load, as much as he can carry. Every vessel cannot bear up with a like sail; and, therefore, God, to keep us from oversetting, puts on so much as will safest bring us to heaven, our desired port.

Let us, therefore, *cast* these cares and *burdens* upon him who hath promised to sustain us, * and turn the stream of our desires heavenward, where alone we can find permanent and satisfactory good.

Walk humbly with God. † Keep yourselves always in an awful fear of his dread majesty. Be constant in the exercise of grace, and the performance of duty. These are the only things exempted from vanity and vexation: in these alone can the soul find true rest and contentment. And therefore Solomon, after he had pierced and searched through all the world; and pronounced riches, strength, beauty, wisdom, learning, and all to be *vanity and vexation of spirit;* he rests himself, in the close, and tells us, Eccl. xii. 13, *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man.* It is his whole duty, and his only happiness in this life.

* Ps. lv. 22.

† Ὅλον κενον τι ην εχι, περι ὁ δει σωδην εισφερεσθαι; ἐν τουτο· διανοια δικαια, και πραξεις κοινωνικαι, και λογος ὁιος μηποτε διαψευσασθαι, και διαθεσις ασπαζομενη παν το συμβαινον, ὡς αναγκαιον, ὡς γνωριμον, ὡς απ' αρχης τοιαυτης και πηγης ῥεον. Ἐχων σεαυτον τη κλωθοι συνεπιδιδα, παρεχων συννησαι, ὁις τισι ποτε πραγμασι βουλεται. Antonin. l. iv s. 33, 34.

A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION

ON THE

LORD'S PRAYER.

WITH A CATECHISTICAL EXPLICATION THEREOF: BY WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER, FOR THE INSTRUCTING OF YOUTH.

"*After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as* it is *in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*" MATT. vi. 9—13.

INTRODUCTION.

HAVING often seriously considered with myself the great use that is made of this most excellent Form of Prayer, composed by our Blessed Lord and Saviour himself; as the great great benefit and advantage, that might accrue unto all those that with understanding make a due use of it in their daily devotions; I thought it might be very necessary for your instruction, and greatly conducible unto your salvation, to lay before your consideration, as brief and succinct an Exposition thereof, as the large extent and various copiousness of the matter contained therein will permit.

The Blessed Apostle, St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xiv. 15, tells us, that he would *pray with the spirit, and* he would *pray with understanding also.* And, indeed, when we pray, to pray with understanding what we pray, is one great requisite to make our prayers spiritual; and, through the prevailing intercession of Jesus Christ, to become acceptable unto God the Father. But to mutter over a round of words only, as the Papists are taught and as multitudes of many ignorant persons among us do also, without understanding what they signify, or being duly affected with those wants and necessities which we beg of God the supplies of, is not to offer up a prayer unto the Almighty, but only to make a charm.

Now, because there is no Form of Prayer, that ever we have heard or read of, that is deservedly so much in use, as this of our Lord's is, I shall endeavour, in some Discourses thereupon, to unfold

to you those Voluminous Requests which we offer up unto God, when we thus pray, as our Saviour here teacheth us: wherein, as I doubt not but as I may greatly instruct the ignorance of many, so possibly I may bring very much to the remembrance of those who have attained to great understanding in religion, those things, which may provoke their zeal and excite their affections: and both these undertakings, through the blessing of God upon it, may be very usefully profitable to enable them to pray with understanding and with the spirit also, when they approach the Throne of Grace, to present their petitions unto the great God, as by the intercession, so in the words of his dear Son.

In this chapter, which contains in it a great part of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, our Lord lays before his hearers several directions concerning two necessary duties in a Christian's practice; and they are Almsgiving and Prayer: the former, a duty relating more immediately unto men; the latter, a duty in a more especial manner respecting God himself: in both which he not only cautions us against, but strictly forbids all ostentation and vain-glory. *Therefore,* says he, *when thou doest* thine *alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee:* for this is the practice of *hypocrites, that they may have glory of men:* verse 2. *And, when thou prayest, be not as the hypocrites: for they love to pray in the Synagogues and corners of the streets; that they may be seen of men:* verse 5. Thus must we not do in either of these cases: for, as we must not give alms that we may be seen of men, so neither must we pray that we may be heard and observed of men: for what can be more absurd and ridiculous, as well as wicked and impious, than to be begging applause from some, when we are giving alms to others; or, whilst we are praying to the great God of Heaven and Earth, to make frail mortal men, like ourselves, our idols? which we do, whensoever we pray, rather that we may be heard and admired by men, than that God should hear us and accept us.

In the next words our Saviour proceeds in laying down some other directions concerning the duty of prayer: and therein he forbids his hearers to use vain repetitions in prayer: verse 7. *When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do.* Not that all repetitions in prayer are vain babblings, in the sight of God: for our Lord himself prayed thrice, using the same words; for so we read Matt. xxvi. 44. For, doubtless, as copiousness and variety of fluent expressions, in any, usually flow from raised affections; so, when those affections are heightened and raised to an ecstasy and agony of soul in our wrestlings with God in prayer, ingemina-

tions are then the most proper and most elegant way of expressing them, doubling and redoubling the same petitions again and again: not allowing God, if I may so speak with holy reverence, so much time, nor ourselves so much leisure, as to form in our minds, much more with our lips to offer up, any new requests; till, by a holy violence in wrestling with God, we have extorted out of his hands those mercies and blessings our hearts are set upon the suing to him for. Vain repetitions, therefore, are such as are made use of by any, without new and lively stirrings and motions of the heart and affections at the same time. And that, which makes a prayer vain, makes a repetition in prayer to be vain also. Now that is a vain prayer, and we shall certainly find it so, when the requests we offer up to God therein are heartless and lifeless. For we must know, God hath commanded us to pray; not that he might be excited and moved by hearing the voice of our cries in prayer, to give unto us those mercies and blessings, which he himself was not resolved beforehand to bestow upon us; but that we ourselves might be fitted and prepared to receive from him, what he is always ready and willing to confer upon us. He requires prayer from us, not that he might be affected therewith; for, as the Apostle St. James tells us, *with* him *there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning:* James i. 17: but that we ourselves might have our hearts raised and affected therewith. And, therefore, the chiefest effect of prayer being to affect ourselves, if prayer itself be not vain, neither are repetitions in prayer vain, if, whilst we are spreading the same requests before God, we do it with new affections and desires. No prayer, therefore, ought to be accused of idle babbling and vain repetitions; but those, that pray, may, I fear, too often be charged with it. And here, by the way, I desire all those, who are offended at or refuse to join with the stated Forms of Prayer that the Church hath appointed to be made use of either in public or private because the same requests do many times occur therein, to keep a strict eye upon their hearts and affections; and then the scruples and objections, that they make, will presently be removed: for it is much in their own power to make them to be, either vain repetitions, or the most fervent ingeminations of their most affectionate desires unto God, and the most spiritual and forcible part of all their prayers and supplications they offer up unto him.

But, then, further: as our Saviour forbids vain repetitions in prayer, so he likewise forbids *much-speaking: For they think,* says our Saviour, Matt, vi. 7; *that they shall be heard for their much-speaking.*

Now, as the former prohibition doth not exclude all repetitions in prayer, so neither doth this latter exclude (as some ignorant persons, perhaps, who are soon wearied out with the service of God, may be apt to think) long prayers: for this would be a flat contradiction to his own practice; for it is said, in St. Luke vi. 12, *that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer unto God.*

Some, indeed, take the word προσευχη *prayer*, to signify the House of Prayer: as if our Saviour continued only in such a dedicated House or Chapel all night; according as Juvenal useth the word, *in quâ te quæro proseuchâ.* Yet, as it will be hard to prove that the Jews had any houses for prayer, besides their Synagogues, which were not seated in desolate (whither our Saviour went then to pray) but in populous cities and frequented places: so it will be more hard to imagine, that our Saviour would continue all night in the House of Prayer, if he had not been taken up in the performance of the Duty of Prayer.

There is, therefore, a great deal of difference between much-speaking in prayer, and speaking much in prayer: for, certainly, a man may speak much to God in prayer, when yet he may not be guilty of much-speaking: for there is a compendious way of speaking, to speak much in a little; and there is a babbling way of speaking, when, by many tedious ambages and long impertinencies, men pour out a sea of words, and scarce one drop of sense or matter.

Now it is this last way of speaking unto God, which our Saviour here condemns. And condemns it justly: for it shows either folly or irreverence. Folly, in that it is a sign we do not sufficiently consider what we ask: Irreverence, in that it is a sign we do not consider of whom we ask. And such men are rather to be esteemed talkative, than devout.

But when a man's soul is full fraught with matter (of which, if he duly weighs either his spiritual wants or his temporal sorrows and afflictions, he can never be unfurnished) to pour out his soul, and with a torrent of holy rhetoric lay open his case before God, begging seasonable supplies in suitable expressions, certainly he cannot fall under the reproof of much-speaking, although he may speak much and long: for such an one hath much to say; and, whilst matter and affections last, let his prayer be an hour long, yea a day long, yea an eternity long, as our praises shall be in heaven, he is not to be censured for a babbler, but hath still spoken much in a little.

It is true, the Wise Man hath commanded, that our *words be few* in our addresses to God: Eccles. v. 2: and he gives a most forcible

reason; *for God* is *in heaven, and thou upon earth.* His Infinite Majesty should, therefore, over-awe thee from using any rash and vain loquacity. But yet this makes not against long prayers: for many words may be but a few to expess the sentiments of our souls; and none can be too many, while the heart keeps pace with the tongue, and every petition is filled with matter and winged with affections.

And, whereas our Saviour condemns the Pharisees, who *devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers:* Matt. xxiii. 14, yet, certain it is, that it was not their long prayers that he condemns, but their pretence and hypocrisy.

Thus much I thought fit to observe from the context.

Our Saviour, having thus cautioned his Disciples against the sins of the Pharisees and Heathen in their prayers, comes, in the words I have read, to instruct them how to pray. *After this manner, therefore, pray ye, Our Father, &c.*

Some, taking advantage from these words, deny this to be used as a prayer itself; but only as a model and platform, to direct us how to pray.

But, if we consult, not only the practice of the Church of Christ in all ages, but the Scripture itself, we shall find it to be both the one and the other: for it is our Saviour's express injunction, Luke xi. 2, *When ye pray, say;* and what should they say, but the words immediately following, *Our Father, which art in heaven, &c?* One Evangelist says, *pray after this manner*: the other saith, *when ye pray, say*: from both which, compared together, it is easy to collect, that it is both a pattern for us to form our prayers by, and that it is a prayer itself, which our Saviour, in condescension to our infirmities, hath framed for us; putting words into our mouths, to beg of God those blessings, which, through his most prevalent intercession, shall not be denied us.

And, indeed, of all prayers, this is the most absolute and comprehensive; containing in it, not so many words as petitions: for there is not any one thing that we can pray for, according to the will of God, but it is summarily couched in this.

And yet this comprehensiveness, which is the admirable excellency of this prayer, hath been the only reason why some of late have scrupled and refused to use it; because they cannot pierce through all that is signified by these substantial expressions. They think they should take God's Name in vain, in uttering that before him, which they do not understand the utmost extent of.

But, if they did but consider their own prayers, the same doubts

would still remain. When they pray that God's Name may be glorified, can they comprehend in that short time, while they are uttering those words, the infinite latitude of that request? Is it unlawful, at the close of our prayers, to desire that God would give us all good things, which we have not mentioned before him? And yet who of us can conceive how large an extent that request may have? May we not say, *Amen*, and seal up our prayers with a *So be it;* though, while we are speaking it, we cannot presently recollect all that hath been mentioned before God in prayer?

And, for any to say, that the Lord's Prayer is a morsel too big for their mouths, as some have done, I have always accounted it a most unworthy and unsavory speech. Certainly, Christ thought it not too big for his Disciples: whose capacities, at that time, were, possibly, none of the largest; as appears in many instances, particularly in the nature of Christ's Kingdom, which he taught them to pray that it might come, which they thought to be temporal and earthly. And those, who refuse the use of the Lord's Prayer as too big for them, would yet think themselves much wronged, if we should but suspect them as ignorant in that, and in many other points of Christain Doctrine, as the Disciples were when our Saviour instructed them thus to pray.

It being, therefore, as I hope, clear and evident, that we may often pray in these words, and that we must always pray after this manner; let us now proceed to consider the Prayer itself. In which there are these Four Parts.

I. The PREFACE, OR INTRODUCTION, to it.
II. The PETITIONS, OR REQUESTS, we present to God; in which the greatest part of it consists.
III. The DOXOLOGY, or PRAISE-GIVING: for praise is a necessary part of prayer.
IV. The CONCLUSION, OR RATIFICATION of all, in the sealing particle, *Amen.*

I shall speak somewhat of these briefly, in the general; and, then, more particularly of each, as my text directs me.

FIRST. For the Introduction or Preface unto the prayer: and that is contained in these words, *Our Father, which art in heaven.*

This is used as a preparative to prayer. And what greater inducement can there be to dispose us into a holy awe and reverence of God, than to set before us the greatness and glory of that Majesty, before whom we prostrate ourselves?

And, therefore, we find that the Saints in Scripture, in all their approaches to the Throne of Grace, were wont, in the beginning of their prayers, to affect and over-awe their hearts with the humble mention of God's glorious attributes. Thus Solomon: 1 Kings viii. 23. *Lord God of Israel there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants.* Thus Jehoshaphat: 2 Chron. xx. 6. *O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in thine hand is there not power and might?* So Hezekiah: 2 Kings xix. 15. *O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art God, even thou alone,* who *hast made heaven and earth.* And so the Prophet: Jer. xxxii. 17, 18,.19. *Ah Lord God! behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth, by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. The Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of Hosts, is his name, great in counsel, and mighty in work.* And thus our Saviour himself: Matt. xi. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.* And so the Apostle: Acts iv. 24. *Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.*

And, thus to consider seriously of and reverently to express the infinitely glorious attributes of God, is an excellent means to compose us into a holy fear and awe of God; such as becomes vile dust and ashes to be affected with, when it stands in the presence of its great Lord and Creator. Only here let us remember, that we dwell not so long upon the titles and attributes of God nor run so much out into preface as to forget our errand unto him.

SECONDLY. Next after the Preface, we have the Petitions following in their order. Of these, some reckon six, others seven: but which soever we take, the matter is not great. They may all be reduced under two general heads.

First, Such as respect God's glory.

Secondly, Such as respect ourselves and others. The three first respect God's glory; and the three or four last our own good: and that either temporal or spiritual. Temporal, in begging at God's hands our daily bread: spiritual, in desiring both the pardon of and deliverance from sin.

And here again we may observe the admirable order and method of this prayer; in that our Saviour hath placed the petition, which refers to our temporal good, as it were in the very midst and centre of it, it being encompassed round about with petitions for heavenly and spiritual blessings. And this may intimate to us,

that we are only to bait at the world, in our passage and journey to heaven; that we ought to begin with spirituals and end with spirituals: but only to take up and refresh ourselves a little with our daily bread in our way.

THIRDLY. In the Doxology, or Praise, there are four things contained.

First, God's Sovereignty: *Thine is the kingdom.*

Secondly, God's Omnipotency: *and the power.*

Thirdly, God's excellency; *and the glory.*

Fourthly, The Eternity and Unchangeableness of them, and of all God's other attributes, noted to us in that expression *for ever.*

FOURTHLY. Here is the ratifying particle, *Amen,* added as a seal to the whole prayer: and it importeth a desire to have that confirmed or granted, which we have prayed for.

And thus Benaiah, when he had received instructions from David concerning the establishing of Solomon in the kingdom, answereth thereto *Amen;* and explains it; 1 Kings i. 36. *The Lord God of my lord the king say so too.*

So that when we add this word, *Amen,* at the end and close of our prayers, it is as much as if we had said, *The Lord God say so too;* or the Lord grant these requests: for the proper signification of *Amen,* is, *so be it,* or *so it is,* or *so it shall be:* the former notes our desires; the latter, our confidence and assurance of being heard.

Now of all these four parts, of which this Prayer is composed, I shall speak in their order.

I. Let us consider the PREFACE, in these words, *Our Father, which art in heaven.*

And here God is described by two of his most eminent attributes, his Grace and Glory, his Goodness and his Greatness: by the one, in that he is styled, *Our Father;* by the other, in that he is said to be *in heaven.* And both these are most sweetly tempered together, to beget in us a holy mixture of filial boldness and awful reverence, which are so necessary to the sanctifying of God's name in all our addresses to him.

We are commanded to *come to the Throne of Grace with boldness:* Heb. iv. 16: and, yet, to *serve God acceptably, with reverence and with fear:* Heb. xii. 28. Yea, and indeed the very calling of it a *Throne of Grace,* intimates both these affections at once. It is a Throne, and therefore requires awe and reverence; but it is a Throne of Grace too, and therefore permits holy freedom and confidence.

And so we find all along in the prayers of the saints, how they mix the consideration of God's mercy and his majesty together, in the very prefaces and preparations to their prayers. So Neh. i. 5; *Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him.* So Dan. ix. 4; *O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him.*

Now this excellent mixture of awful and encouraging attributes will keep us from both the extremes, of despair on the one hand, and of presumption on the other. He is *our Father*: and this may correct the despairing fear, which might otherwise seize us upon the consideration of his majesty and glory. And he is likewise infinitely glorious, a God whose throne is in the highest heavens, and the earth his footstool: and this may correct the presumptuous irreverence, which else the consideration of God, as *our Father*, might perhaps embolden us unto.

Now here I shall, first, speak of the relation of God unto us as a *Father;* and, then, of the place of his glory and residence *in heaven:* and of both but briefly; but I must not dwell upon every particular.

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i. To begin with THE RELATION OF GOD TO US, AS A FATHER.

1. Now God is a Father *three* ways.

(1) God is a Father by Eternal Generation.

(2) By Temporal Creation and Providence.

(3) By Spiritual Regeneration and Adoption.

(1) God is a Father by Eternal Generation: having by an inconceivable and ineffable way, begotten his Son, God co-equal, co-eternal with himself; and therefore called, the *only begotten Son of God:* John iii. 16. Thus God is a Father, only to our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his Divine Nature. And whensoever this title, Father, is given to God, with relation to the Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ, it denotes only the First Person in the ever Blessed Trinity; who is, therefore, chiefly and especially called the *Father.*

(2) God is a Father by temporal Creation, as he gives a being and existence to his Creatures; creating those whom he made rational after his own image and similitude. And, therefore, God is said to be a *Father of spirits:* Heb. xii. 9. And the angels are called the sons of God: Job i. 6; *There was a day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord.* And so, Adam, upon the account of his creation, is called the son of God: Luke iii. 38; where the Evangelist runs up the genealogy of mankind till it terminates in God, *who was the son of Adam who was the son of God.*

(3) God is said to be a Father by Spiritual Regeneration and Adoption. And so all true believers are said to be the sons of God, and to be born of God: John i. 12, 13. To *as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of the will of man, but of God.* So, Rom. viii. 15, 16, we are said to receive *the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* For *the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*

Now in these two last significations, this expression, *Our Father which art in heaven,* is to be understood: and so they denote, not any one particular Person of the Blessed Trinity; but it is a relative attribute, belonging equally to all the Three Persons. God is the Father of all men, by Creation and Providence; and he is especially the Father of the faithful, by Regeneration and Adoption. Now, as these actions of creation, regeneration, and adoption, are common to the whole Trinity, so likewise is the title of Father. God, the First Person in the Blessed Trinity, is indeed eminently called the Father, but not in respect of us, but in respect of Christ, his Only Begotten Son from all eternity. In respect of us, the whole Trinity is *our Father which is in heaven,* both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: and, in praying to *our Father,* we pray to them all jointly; for Christ, the Second Person in the Trinity, is expressly called the Father: Isa. ix. 6; *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father.* And we are said to be born of the Spirit: John iii. 5; *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit.*

Now that God should be pleased to take this into his glorious style, even to be called *Our Father,* it may teach us.

First. To admire his infinite condescension, and our own unspeakable privilege and dignity: 1 John iii. 1; *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.*

Indeed, for God to be a Father by Creation and Providence though it be a mercy, yet is no privilege: for, in that sense, he is *parens rerum,* "The common parent of all things;" yea, the Father of Devils themselves, and of those wretches who are as wicked and shall be as miserable as Devils. But, that God should be thy Father by Regeneration and Adoption, that he should make thee his son through his Only Begotten Son; that he should rake up such dirt and filth as thou art, and lay it in his bosom; that he should take aliens and strangers near unto himself, and adopt

enemies and rebels into his family, register their names in the book of life, make them heirs of glory, co-heirs with Jesus Christ his Eternal Son, as the Apostle admiringly recounts it, Rom. viii. 17; this is both mercy and miracle together.

Secondly. It should teach us to walk worthy of this high and honourable relation unto which we are taken; and to demean ourselves as children ought to do, in all holy obedience to his commands; with fear and reverence to his authority, and an humble submission to his will.

This God challengeth at our hands, as being our Father: Mal. i. 6; *If I be a Father, where is mine honour?* and, 1 Pet. i. 17; *If ye call on the Father, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.* And, likewise, by giving thee leave to style him by this name of Father, he puts thee in remembrance, that thou shouldest endeavour, by a holy life and conversation, to be like thy Father; and so approve it to thine own conscience and to all others, that thou art indeed a child, a son of God.

Thirdly. Is God thy Father? This then may give us abundance of assurance, that we shall receive at his hands what we ask, if it be good for us; and, if it be not, we have no reason to complain, that we are not heard, unless he should turn our prayers into curses.

And this very consideration seems to be the reason, why our Saviour chooseth this among all God's titles and attributes to prefix before this prayer. And, indeed, it is the most proper name by which we can style God in our prayers unto him: for this name of Father emboldens faith; and is as a pledge and pawn beforehand, that our request shall be heard and granted: and, therefore, our Saviour, for the confirmation of faith, argues very strongly from this very title of Father: Matt. vii. 9, 10, 11, *What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts* when *your children* ask them, *how much more shall* my *Father give good things to them that ask him?* Indeed, it is a most encouraging argument: for, if the bowels of an earthly parent, who yet many times is humorous, and whose tenderest mercies are but cruelties in respect of God, if his compassions will not suffer his children to be defeated in their reasonable and necessary requests; how much less will God, who is love and goodness itself, and who hath inspired all parental affections into other fathers, suffer his children to return ashamed, when they beg of him those things which are most agreeable to his will and to their wants!

What dost thou then, O Christian, complaining of thy wants, and

sighing under thy burdens? Is not God thy Father? Go and boldly lay open thy case unto him: his bowels will certainly roll and yearn towards thee. Is it Spiritual Blessings thou wantest? Spread thy requests before him: for, as he is thy Father, so he is *the God of all Grace*, and will give unto thee of his fulness; for God loves that his children should be like him. Or, is it Temporal Mercies thou wantest? why, he is thy Father, and he is *the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort:* and why shouldest thou go so dejected and disconsolate, who hast a Father so able and so willing to relieve and supply thee? Only beware that thou askest not *stones* for *bread*, nor *scorpions* for *fish;* and then ask what thou wilt for thy good, and thou shalt receive it.

Fourthly. Is God thy Father? This then may encourage us against despair, under the sense of our manifold sins against God, and departures from him: for he will certainly receive us upon our repentance and returning to him.

This very apprehension was that, which wrought upon the Prodigal: Luke xv. 18: *I will arise, and go to my father.* The consideration of our own guilt and vileness, without the consideration of God's infinite mercy, tends only to widen the breach between him and us: for those, that are altogether hopeless, will sin the more implacably and bitterly against God; like those the prophet mentions, Jer. ii. 25, that said there was no hope, and therefore they would persist in their wickedness. But, now, to consider that God is our Father; and that, though we have cast off the duty and obedience of children, yet upon our submission, he will bid us welcome and instate us again in his favour; this, to the ingenuous spirit of a Christian, is a sweet and powerful motive, to reduce him from his wandering and straying. For it will work, both upon his shame and upon his hope: upon his shame, that ever he should offend so gracious a Father; and upon his hope, that those offences shall be forgiven him through that very mercy, that he hath abused. Thus we read, Jer. iii. 4, 5: *Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth? Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end?* noting, that, when we plead with God under the winning name of Father, his anger cannot long last; but his bowels of mercy will, at last overcome the sentiments of his wrath and justice.

And thus much concerning the endearing title of Father, which our Saviour directs us to use in our prayers unto God.

2. The next thing observable, is the particle *Our*, Our Father: which notes to us, that God is not only the Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ, but he is the Father of all men. He is the Father of all by Creation and Providence. And, therefore, we have the interrogation, Mal. ii. 10; "*Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?*" But he is especially the Father of the faithful, by Regeneration and Adoption: who are *born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God:*" John i. 13.

This therefore should teach us. (1) To esteem one another as brethren.

Outward respects, the grandeur and earthly privileges and advantages of the world, make no disparity in God's love to us, or in our relation to him: and, therefore, howsoever thou mayest be advanced in wealth, or honour, or parts above others; yet, still, remember that they are thy brethren, as they partake of the same common nature, and much more if they partake of the same special grace. Yea, Christ himself, who is the Lord of All, *is not ashamed to call them brethren:* Heb. ii. 11: and shalt thou, who art but an adopted son, no otherwise than the meanest saint, be ashamed of the relation? especially considering there is no eldership, nor right of first-born in the family; for they are all first-born, all kings and heirs with Christ Jesus himself.

(2) If thou art mean and low in the world, this should teach thee to be well content with thy present state and condition; for God is thy Father, and a Father to thee equally with the greatest.

There is not the highest person upon earth, but, if he belong to God, prefers that relation above all his other titles: if he can write Prince, King, or Emperor, and can afterwards subjoin a child of God, all his other titles stand but for a cypher with him. This, O Christian, how mean, how despised soever that art, this is thy privilege; and a privilege it is that equals thee with David, with Solomon, and with all the great ones of the earth, that ever laid down their diadems and scepters at the feet of God. What says the Apostle? Gal. iii. 28; *There is neither bond nor free, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

(3) Since when we pray we must say, *Our Father,* this teacheth us, to interest one another in our prayers.

Our Father would not have us selfish, so much as in our prayers: but, in the very entrance into them, we are put in mind of the communion of saints, to beg those blessings for all that belong to God, which we ask for ourselves. For, as Christ hath made us all *Kings,* so he hath made all *Priests* to *God* and his *Father:* now the office of a priest is intercession; and, therefore, when we go to God, we should bear upon our breasts the name of our brethren, and

present them before God, through the intercession and mediation of Jesus Christ our great High-Priest, that both we and they may be accepted of God.

And this we ought to do, both in public and private. It is true, in our secret prayers we may pray particularly for ourselves; and we have frequent instances of it in Scripture: yet ought we, in every prayer that we make to God, to be mindful of the state and condition of our brethren. Yea, and it is very lawful and commendable, even in secret between God and our own souls, in those cases that are common to us with the rest of God's saints and people, to join them in our prayers; and, although we are all alone, yet to say *Our Father:* for we find Daniel praying, Dan. ix. 17; *O our God,* when yet he was in secret; *O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant.* And this is to show that near and entire communion, which ought to be between all the saints; praying with and praying for all the members of the body of Jesus Christ, and esteeming their interest as our own.

(4) This shows us likewise the high privilege of the children of God, that they have a stock of prayers going to heaven for them, from all their fellow-saints throughout the world; yea, from those whom they never knew, whom they never heard of, yet are they continually appearing before the Throne of Grace on their behalf.

And thou, who wouldst think it a great favour if thou wert interested in the prayers of some who are mighty in prayer, and whom thou hast begged to recommend thy condition to God, mayest here have abundant comfort, in that thou art nearly concerned and interested in all the prayers that are put up to God throughout the whole world, by all those that are most prevalent at the Throne of Grace: yea, which is more, thou hast an interest in all the prayers, that have ever been preferred to heaven by all the saints from the beginning of the world unto this very day; for not only this present Church, but the Church in all ages is the body of Christ, and every member of it imitates the pattern of Christ's intercession: John xvii. 20, *Neither pray I for these alone, but for* all *those that shall believe in me.* The difference is, that Christ's intercession was authoritative; theirs, only charitative.

And thus much shall suffice to be spoken concerning God's goodness and mercy, expressed in those words, *Our Father.*

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ii. The next expression SETS FORTH HIS GLORY AND GREATNESS: *which art in heaven.*

"But is not God every where present? Doth he not fill heaven and earth, and all things? Yea, is it not said, that *the heaven of heavens cannot contain him?* How then are our prayers to be directed to God in heaven only, since he is as well on earth as in heaven? And were he only in heaven, and not every where present on earth, it would be in vain for us to pray, because our prayers could never reach his ears, nor arrive to his notice."

I answer, It is true, God is every where present; and all that we think, we think in him; and all that we speak, we speak unto him: he understands the silent motion of our lips, when we whisper a prayer to him in our closets; yea, the secret motions of our hearts, when we only think a prayer. Therefore, when our Saviour bids us direct our prayers to our Father *in heaven*, this doth not imply, that God is no where present, or that he no where hears prayer, but only in heaven. But this expression is used.

1. *Because Heaven is the most glorious place of God's residence*, where he hath more especially established his Throne of Grace, and there sits upon it.

Now, because it is a most glorious and majestical thing to hear the suits and receive the petitions that are tendered to him; therefore the Scripture ascribes it to the most glorious and majestical place, and that is to heaven. And, therefore, we are commanded to pray to our Father which is in Heaven, to keep alive a due sense of his Majesty upon our hearts. He would not have us think it a mean and trivial thing to have our prayers heard; and, therefore, he represents himself to us arrayed in all his glory, and sitting upon his throne in the highest heavens; willing to be thought a God never more glorious, than when he is a God hearing prayer.

2. Our prayers are directed to our Father in Heaven, *because, though he hears them wheresoever they are uttered, yet he no where hears them with acceptance but only in heaven.*

And the reason is, because our prayers are acceptable, only as they are presented before God through the intercession of Christ. Now Christ performs his mediatory office only in heaven: for he performs it in both natures, as he is God and Man; and so he is only in heaven. And, therefore, we are still concerned to pray to our Father in Heaven. God, indeed, hears us upon earth; for *there is not a word in* our *tongue, but, behold, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether:* but this will not avail us, unless God hears our prayers a second time, as repeated over in the intercession of Jesus Christ, and perfumed with the much incense which he offers up with the prayers of all the saints.

Since then we are directed to pray to our Father, which is in Heaven, this,

(1) May inform us, that there is no circumstance of time or place, that can hinder us from praying.

For heaven is over thee, and open to thee, wheresoever thou art. There is no clime so remote, which is not overspread with that pavilion: and thou art in all places equally near to heaven; and God is in it, sitting upon his Throne of Grace, to receive and answer thy requests, wheresoever thou offerest them up unto him. And, therefore, we find, in the Scripture, some praying in God's House of Prayer, some making their houses houses of prayer; St. Peter prayed on the house-top, when he fell into his trance; Isaac, in the open fields; our Saviour, on a mountain; Jonah, in a whale's belly; Abraham's servant, in his journey; and Asa, in the midst of a tumultuous and bloody battle. Yea, whatsoever thou art doing thou mayest pray, so long as heaven is over thee and God in it: whatsoever company thou art in, whatsoever employment thou art about, thou mayest still pray; for thy Father, that is in Heaven, still hears thee. He hears thy thoughts and thy desires, when either they are too big, or when it is not expedient, to articulate them into words.

Indeed, the voice in prayer is not always necessary; nay, sometimes it is not convenient: yea, it is never necessary, but only upon three accounts;

[1] As that, which God requires should be employed in his service: for this was a great end why it was given us, that therewith we might bless and praise God. With the tongue, saith the Apostle, *bless we God, even the Father*: Jam. iii. 9. Or,

[2] When, in secret, it may be a means to help to raise up our affections; keeping it still within the bounds of decency and privacy. Or,

[3] In our joining with others, it helps likewise to raise and quicken their affections.

Otherwise, were it not for these three reasons, the voice is no more necessary to make our wants and desires known unto God, than it is to make them known to our own hearts. For thy Father, which is in Heaven, is not certainly excluded from any part of the earth: he is with thee, and lays his ear to thy very heart, and hears the voice of thy thoughts when thy tongue is silent: and thou mayest, whatsoever work or business thou art doing, dart up a prayer and a winged desire unto him; which shall be as acceptable and effectual, as the more solemn performance of this duty at stated times.

(2) Is thy Father in Heaven? Thy prayers then should be made so as to pierce the heavens where God is.

But how can this be done, since the distance between heaven and us is so infinite?

This is not to be done by the intension of raising thy voice, but by the intension of raising thy zeal and spirit, for zeal and affection is a strong bow, that will shoot a petition through heaven itself. Let all thy petitions therefore be ardent, and carry fire in them; and this will cause them to ascend to the element of pure celestial fire, from whence thy breast was at first inflamed.

It is a most remarkable place, Exod. xiv. 15. When the Red Sea was before the Israelites, and the Egyptians pursuing them behind, and unpassable mountains on each side, the people murmuring, and Moses their captain and guide in an unextricable straight, we read not of any vocal prayer that Moses then put up; and yet God calls to him, *Why criest thou unto me?* A prayer it was, not so much as accented, not so much as whispered; and yet so strong and powerful, that it pierced heaven, and was louder in the ears of God than the voice of thunder.

And thus much shall suffice to be spoken concerning the Preface of this Prayer, *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

II. Let us now proceed unto the PETITIONS themselves: the first three of which relate unto God's Glory; the other, to our Temporal and Spiritual Good.

Of those, which relate to God's glory, the first desireth the advancement of this glory itself; *Hallowed be thy Name:* the second, the means of effecting it; *Thy Kingdom come:* the third, the manifestation of it; *Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.*

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i. I begin with the FIRST of these, *Hallowed be thy Name.* In the explication of which, we shall enquire,

1. What is to be understood by the Name of God. 2. What it is to Hallow this name of God. 3. What is contained in this petition, and what we pray for when we say, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

1. What is meant by *the Name* of God?

To this I answer, that the Name of God is any perfection ascribed to him, whereby he hath been pleased to make himself known to the sons of men. For names are given to this very intent, that they might declare what the thing is, to which that name doth belong. Thus, when God had created Adam and made him lord of

this visible world, he caused the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air to pass before him, as it were to do homage to their new sovereign, and to receive names from him; which, according to the plenitude and perfection of his knowledge, did then aptly serve to express their several natures, and were not only names but definitions too. So, when mention is made in Scripture of the Name of God, it signifies some expression of his Infinite Essence: in which he is pleased graciously to condescend to the weakness of our capacity, and to spell out himself to us, sometimes by one perfection, and sometimes by another; since it is utterly impossible for us finite creatures, to have a full and comprehensive knowledge of that being which is infinite: for so, God is only known to himself; being, as infinite to all others, so finite to his own knowledge and understanding. And, therefore, he hath displayed before us his Name, to give us some help and advantage to conceive somewhat of him; though his nature and essence are in themselves incomprehensible to us, and shall be so for ever, even in heaven itself.

Now this Name of God may well be distinguished into two sorts: his Titles, and his Attributes.

(1) His Titles are his name.

And so he is in Scripture frequently called Jehovah, God, Lord, Creator, and the like. And most of these his titles are relative, respecting us: so his name of Creator denotes his infinite power, giving being to all things: Lord and King signify his dominion and authority, in disposing and governing all that he hath made: Father signifies his care and goodness, in providing for his creatures: Redeemer, his mercy and grace, in delivering them from temporal evils and calamities, or especially from eternal death and destruction.

Now these Relative Titles, though they properly belong unto God, yet are they not absolutely essential to him; but connote a respect unto the creatures. And, therefore, though, before the creation of the world, God was for ever the same Infinitely Blessed Being that he now is, and by the creation of it no accession was made to his infinitely perfect nature, (*for in him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning;* but *he is yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever:*) yet could he not be called by the name of Creator, or Lord, or Redeemer, or Father (unless in respect of his Eternal Son); but all these titles result from the relations wherein we stand unto God, of creatures, subjects, and children.

These names, therefore, had their beginning, some in the beginning of time, and some since; and yet they do very properly signify unto us that God, who is without beginning or end.

(2) As his titles, so his Attributes are his name. And these are of two sorts, either Incommunicable or Communicable.

[1] The Incommunicable Attributes of God. And these are those, which are so proper to the Divine Essence, that there is scarce the least foot-steps or resemblance of them to be found in any of the creatures.

And such are his Eternity: which denotes a duration, as well without beginning as without end: for, though there are some creatures, whose beings shall never have a period set to them, as angels and men; yet there is no creature, that never had no beginning of its existence.

And so God's Infiniteness and Immensity, filling all places and exceeding all: which was most excellently set forth in that most significant, yet unintelligible paradox of the Heathen Philosopher, That God was a circle, whose centre was every where, but its circumference no where.

His Simplicity also, excluding all composition and mixture; which no creature doth: for take the most simple of them, as angels and the separate souls of men, yet they are at least compounded in their essences, and powers, and acts; for the power of understanding is not the soul, nor the act of understanding the power; therefore, in these, there is one thing and another. But it is not so in God: but whatsoever is in God is God himself, being one most pure and simple act.

Hence follows his Immutability and Unchangeableness; there being nothing in God, which was not from all eternity.

And, in the same rank, are his Omnipotency and All-sufficiency, his Omniscience and Independency, and the like: which are incommunicable attributes; and cannot, without blasphemy, be ascribed unto any of the creatures.

[2] There are other Attributes of God, that are Communicable; and are so called, because they may, in some analogy and resemblance, be found in the creatures also.

So, to be Holy, Just, Merciful, True, Powerful, and the like, are the names of God; and yet may be ascribed to the creatures. So, in that most triumphant declaration of his name to Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6, 7, we find that the most of the letters that compose it may be found, in some degrees, even among men. The Lord *proclaimed* his *name, The Lord God; merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.* Now this name of God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness, which he seems so much

to delight and glory in, and which he adorns with such fair flourishes, he himself would have us to own and imitate: Luke vi. 36, *Be ye therefore merciful as your Father is merciful,* To aspire to a resemblance with God in his incommunicable attributes and name, is a most horrid and blasphemous presumption; a pride, that cast the devils from heaven to hell: but to aspire to a resemblance unto God in his communicable name, is the tendency of grace, and the effect of the Spirit of God, conforming us in some measure to his purity, and making us *partakers* in this sense *of the divine nature.* And, therefore, it is pressed upon us, Levit. xix. 2; *You shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy:* and Matt. v. 48, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

Now these Communicable Attributes of God, though they may in some respects be found in the creatures, yet then are they properly the Names of God, when they are applied to him free from all those imperfections with which they are necessarily attended in the creatures. Abstract them from all imperfections, and we may apply them to God as his name.

Now these imperfections are of two sorts, either privative or negative.

A creature is then said to be Privatively imperfect, when he falls short of what he ought to be. And so are the best of men imperfect in this life. Merciful they are; but still retain a mixture of cruelty: patient they are; but still they have impatience mixed with it: holy they are; but yet not spotless as the Law requires them to be. And, therefore, in ascribing holiness, mercy, and patience unto God, we must be sure to separate from them all such imperfections as are found in us, through the mixture of the contrary corruptions with those graces; otherwise they will be so far from being the name of God, that they will prove blasphemous derogatives from him.

Neither is this enough, but we must remove all negative imperfections also. Now a creature is said to be Negatively imperfect, when, though it hath all the perfections that are due unto it or required from it, yet it hath not all perfection that is possible or imaginable. Thus, the holy angels and the spirits of just men in heaven, although they are made perfect so as to exclude all privative imperfection, their holiness and their graces there being as perfect as they should be, and as God requires from them: yet have they a negative imperfection; that is, there is some perfection of those graces and of that holiness further possible, which they have not nor is it within the sphere of their natures to attain unto. In

which sense it is said, Job iv. 18, *His angels he charged with folly:* that is, not as if they wanted any wisdom of righteousness that was due unto their natures; but they had not all that wisdom that was possible, and so were at least negatively imperfect.

In all perfections of the creatures, whether angels or men, be they never so great or excellent, there are three imperfections that will necessarily attend them.

1st. That they have them not originally from themselves; but derivatively from another, who is the Author and Embellisher of their Natures.

2dly. That they have them not Unchangeably; but may not only increase but decrease, yea or utterly lose them.

3dly That they have them not Infinitely; but in a stinted and limited measure.

Now in all the communicable attributes of the Divine Nature, remove from them these three negative imperfections, and then apply them to God, and they become his proper name. God is holy, wise, powerful, just, merciful, true, &c. and so are likewise some of his most excellent creatures, whom he hath made like unto himself. But then the difference between God and them consists in this, that his wisdom and the rest of his attributes are originally from him; theirs, derivatively from him: his, infinite and boundless; theirs, limited and stinted: his, invariable and unchangeable: theirs, subject to mutations, and decays, and total abolition. So that, in these three respects, even the communicable attributes of God are themselves incommunicable: and so they are his Name, whereby he is known and differenced from all other beings whatsoever.

But may it not be here said to me, as it was to Manoah, Judges xiii. 18, *Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret* and wonderful?

Indeed, we can no more find out the name of God to perfection, than we can his nature and essence; for both are infinite and unsearchable. And there are two expressions in Scripture, that make this knowledge impossible; the one of them quite contrary to the other. One is, that God *dwelleth in the light which no man can approach:* 1 Tim. vi. 16. *Scrutator majestatis opprimetur a gloria:* "He, that will too busily pry into majesty, shall be oppressed and dazzled with glory." And the other is, that *he dwells in thick darkness:* 2 Chron. vi. 1. Both implying the same impossibility of *searching out the Almighty to perfection;* as Job speaks, ch. xi. 7.

But, though this comprehensive knowledge be impossible, yet God hath given us hints and traces of himself, by which we may discover enough for our adoration, though not perhaps for our satisfaction.

And there are two ways, whereby God hath made known himself and his name unto us: and they are by his works, and by his word.

(1st.) We may spell out God's name by his Works.

And to this end serve those two great capital letters of Heaven and Earth, the Air and Sea: yea, there is no one creature, how vile and contemptible so ever it be, but it reads us lectures of the power, wisdom and goodness of the great Creator. In which sense the Apostle tells us, Rom. i. 20, *The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.*

(2dly.) More expressly and distinctly by his Word: for the Scriptures are *Nomenclatura Dei.*

By these we come to a more clear and evident knowledge of these attributes of God, which the works of nature held forth to us in a more obscure and confused manner. And by this, likewise, we attain to the knowledge of those perfections of God, which the works of Creation and Providence could never have instructed us in: as of a Trinity in Unity, of the Eternal Generation and Temporal Incarnation of the Son of God, of the whole Mystery of Religion, and the tenor of the Covenant of Grace; which are things, that could never have been known but by Divine Revelation.

Indeed we may, from the works of God alone, gather knowledge enough of him to make us inexcusable, if we worship him not as God: for so did the heathen, as the Apostle speaks, in the forecited place; Rom. i. 20. But it is only from the word, that we know so much of God, as to make us eternally blessed and happy. Here, he hath displayed his name, *the Lord God, gracious and merciful; pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin.* Here, alone, hath he made known himself to be our Father in Jesus Christ; and appointed the spiritual worship of himself, that might prepare us for the eternal enjoyment of him in glory.

So that now we see what is meant by the Name of God; his titles as King, Lord, Creator, Father, Redeemer and the like. And his attributes, both communicable, as Justice, Holiness, Wisdom, Mercy and Truth, &c., and incommunicable, as Infinite, Eternal, Unchangeable, Omnipotent, Independent, and such like: and that both this name, both of Titles and Attributes, are made known to us, either by the Works of God or by his Word.

2. Let us, in the next place, enquire what it is *to hallow* this Name of God.

To hallow, is nothing else but to sanctify or make holy: so that *hallowed be thy name,* is no other than, Let thy Name be made Holy.

But here may be a question. "How can creatures be said to make God holy, whereas it is God that makes them holy?"

I answer, there is a three-fold way of hallowing or sanctifying a thing or person. One, by dedication: a second, by infusion: and a third, by declaration.

(1) A thing may be hallowed or made holy, by Dedication; setting them apart for holy uses and services.

So the first-born are said to be sanctified to the Lord; Exod. xiii. 2: and that, because, among men, the first-born were to be priests unto the Lord; and, among beasts, they were to be sacrificed. And, thus, Aaron and his sons and the whole tribe of Levi, whom God took in exchange for the first-born, are said to be consecrated and sanctified; Exod. xxviii. 41: and many more instances might be given to the same purpose, were it needful. And, thus, at least, we are said to be sanctified by baptism; Eph. v. 26: that is, we are, by that holy ordinance, set apart and consecrated to the service of God. Thus one creature may sanctify and make another holy; namely, by dedication or separation to some sacred use and service: and so the Ministers of Christ do sanctify and hallow the elements in the Holy Communion; setting them apart from common and ordinary use to that Blessed Mystery.

(2) There is a sanctification or hallowing, by Infusion or Implanting the real principles and habits of holiness into that which is hallowed.

And, thus, God sanctifies his elect, by infusing of his grace into them; and making them holy, in some measure and similitude like himself. So our Saviour prays, John xvii. 17, *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* And the Apostle, 1 Thess. v. 23, prays, *The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.*

In neither of these two senses is God's name to be sanctified or hallowed by us; for, thus to pray, were to blaspheme.

(3) There is a sanctifying, by Declaration; when we acknowledge and reverence that as holy, that is indeed so.

And thus only it is, that creatures may sanctify the name of God the Creator. So we have it used, Isa. xxix. 23, *They shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.*

Now, thus to sanctify the name of God, is the very same with that other expression that commonly occurs in Scripture, of glorifying God. We can add nothing to his infinite perfections, nor to the lustre and brightness of his crown: yet then are we said to sanctify and glorify God, when, in our most reverend thoughts, we

observe and admire his holiness, and the bright coruscations of his attributes; and when we endeavour, by all holy ways, to declare them unto others, that they may observe and admire them with us, and give unto God that holy veneration which is due unto him.

Thus we see what the name of God is, and what it is to sanctify or hallow this name.

3. Let us now consider *what is contained in this petition, "Hallowed be thy name."* And, here,

(1) In that Christ hath taught us to make this the first petition in our prayer to God, we may learn that the glory of God is to be preferred by us before all other things whatsoever.

And, indeed, that, which God hath made the last and utmost of all his ends, and hath appointed to be the highest and utmost of ours, should be the first of all our thoughts and endeavours; and preferred before whatsoever else is dearest unto us, yea before our very lives themselves.

This was our Saviour's practice: John xii. 27, 28, *Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.* As if he had said, "Though life be naturally dear; and the cup, which I am to drink, very bitter; and the wrath, that I am to undergo, heavy and infinite: yet all these things are not so considerable to me as thy glory; and, therefore, though it be by agonies, by death, by the cross, yet, *Father glorify thy name.*"

The same mind should dwell in us, likewise: and we should hereby be instructed, to desire and pray for other things, with limitations and restrictions; but for the glory of God, absolutely and simply. "*Father, glorify thy name;* and if, in the counsel of thy will and the course of thy providence, it cannot be otherwise than by my suffering or sorrow, yea or death itself: yet, *Father,* even in this, *glorify thy name;* and, out of my very ruins, erect thou a trophy and monument to thy praise. Be thou hallowed and sanctified, although at my cost, and with the loss of all."

(2) In that this petition is placed in the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, it intimates to us, that, in the very beginning and entrance of our prayers, we ought to beg assistance from God, so to perform holy duties that God may glorified, and his name sanctified by us, in it. It is a good and needful request, to beg of God the aid and help of his Spirit, to enable us to hallow his name in the succeeding requests we are to make.

(3) Observe, that when we present this petition before God, we beg three things of him.

First. Such grace of ourselves, as may enable us to sanctify and glorify him.

Secondly. Graces likewise for others, to enable them thereunto.

Thirdly. That God would; by his Almighty Providence, direct and overrule all things, both good and evil, to the advancement of his own glory.

[1] We beg of God, that he would bestow upon us such graces, as are requisite to glorify him in the world.

We beg knowledge and understanding of him, of his nature, of his will, and of his works: for we cannot glorify that God, whom we are ignorant of.

We beg likewise patience and contentment in all estates, thankfulness for every providence; graces, that do highly tend to the promoting of God's honour and glory.

We beg faith, likewise; whereby we give the highest and greatest glory to God, that mortal men are able to ascribe: for, to trust upon his word, and to build upon his promises, is to honour his truth and faithfulness. And, therefore, we have that expression, Rom. iv. 20, that Abraham *was strong in faith, giving glory to God.*

We beg also, that our speech may be savoury, and such as *may minister grace to the hearers.*

And, lastly, an humble, blameless, and exemplary life: for, by our good works, we are to glorify our Heavenly Father.

I cannot stand to insist upon these things, particularly; because my design is only to give you, briefly and summarily, an account of what is contained in this most excellent prayer, that you may understand what you pray for, when you present these petitions before God.

[2] We herein beg of God, that he would so overrule all things whatsoever, that his glory may be secured; nay promoted by them: and, therefore, whatsoever falls out, we ought to say, *Hallowed be thy name* by it. Hereby we pray.

That the gifts and eminent graces of God's children may redound unto his glory; that they may not be puffed up with them, nor ascribe the credit of them to themselves:

That the peace and prosperity of the Church of Christ may turn to the glory of God; that the outward mercies may not make them careless and forgetful of his service and honour:

That the sins and failings of God's people may eventually turn to the glory of God, which seem directly to blot and stain it; and that, by their repentance and confessions, they may give glory to him whom they have offended, and satisfaction to them whom they have scandalized:

That all the afflictions and troubles of his people may, in the end

tend unto his glory as well as their good; by declaring his power in supporting them, and his goodness and mercy in delivering them:

That all the devices and conspiracies, the rage and fury, of the enemies of his Church, may, contrary to their intentions, be overswayed to advance his honour; and that the wrath of man may praise him, by shewing forth his power, wisdom, and goodness, either in restraining or overturning it:

And, finally, That all creatures both in heaven and in earth, yea, all the works of God's hands, should glorify God in the several stations in which he hath set them: some, by being the manifestations of his attributes; and some, the manifesters of them: brutes and senseless creatures passively declaring the glory of their great Creator; and rational and intelligent creatures showing it forth actively; and all concurring in this great work, for which all were made, even the glory and praise of God.

Thus we see what a large and copious request we present before God, when we pray that his Name shall be Hallowed.

Which that it may be, let us ourselves endeavour to be holy; for it is impossible that an unholy heart or life should sanctify a holy God. Whilst we persevere in our wicked conversations we do but mock God and ourselves, when we desire to sanctify that name of his, which we daily profane and pollute; nay, indeed, we do but pray for our destruction; even that God would sanctify his name, part whereof is his just and dreadful severity upon all those, and consequently upon ourselves, who defile and profane it.

And thus I have finished the First Petition, *Hallowed be thy name.*

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ii. The SECOND petition follows: *Thy kingdom come.*

This now very aptly succeeds upon the former, because this is the best way and means to hallow God's Name, by enlarging his kingdom, and bringing in many to submit to his sceptre and government. For, *praise waiteth for God in Sion:* Ps. lxv. 1, and, *his name is great in Israel*: Ps. lxxvi. 1.

Now, here, for our clearer proceeding, we must distinguish of God's kingdom: and then show you how this kingdom comes: and, lastly, what we pray for in presenting this petition to God, *Thy kingdom come.*

1. We must *distinguish of God's kingdom.*

Now the kingdom of God is two-fold; either universal, or more particular and peculiar: the one is his kingdom of Power; the other is his kingdom of Grace.

(1) His Universal Kingdom, which extends over all things in heaven and earth, yea and hell itself.

And, so, he is the sole monarch of the whole world: and all the princes and potentates of the earth are but his viceroys and vicegerents, that govern under and should govern for him: for he is that *Blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of Lords*, as the Apostle styles him, 1 Tim. vi. 15, and *his kingdom ruleth over all*, Ps. ciii. 19. It is true, in this Universal Kingdom there are many rebels, that would not have him to reign over them: many, that daily rise up in arms, break his laws, defy his justice, and reject his mercy: many, that, were their power equal to their malice, would dethrone and depose him from his sovereignty. Whole legions of Infernal Spirits are continually mustering up all their forces, and drawing wretched sinful men into the conspiracy: and their quarrel is for no less than dominion and empire; who shall be king, God or Satan: yet all their attempts are but vain and frustrate; and, in spite of all their impotent rage, God's kingdom shall stand; and, as it was from everlasting, so shall it be to everlasting, *for thine is the kingdom, and power, for ever and ever.*

And, therefore, the most wicked of all God's creatures are still his subjects; not subjects indeed to his laws, for so they break his bonds asunder, and cast away his cords from them: but they are subject to his power and providence; and that, in three respects: as it grants permission, as it imposeth restraints, and as it inflicts punishments.

[1] All are God's subjects, in that they can do nothing without his Permission.

Neither the Devil, that arch-creature, nor the worst of his instruments, can so much as touch a hair of our head, unless leave be granted them. Yea, we find that a whole legion of devils, after they were dispossessed of their usurped abode, durst not so much as house themselves in a herd of swine, without first craving leave of our Saviour: Mark v. 12. And all the villanies and outrages, that have ever been committed in the world, have had their pass from God's permission; without which, the lusts of men, as furious and eager as they are, must needs have miscarrying wombs and dry breasts. Nor is it any taint at all to the pure holiness of God, that he doth thus permit the wickedness of men, which, if he pleased, he might prevent: for, though we are obliged to keep others from sin when it lies in our power to do it, yet no such obligation lies upon God: though he can keep the wickedest wretch on earth from ever sinning any more; yet he permits wisely for the greater ad-

vancement of his own glory and the exercise of his peoples' graces. and at the last he punishes justly.

[2] His kingdom is over all, in that he can Bend in and Restrain his rebellious subjects as he pleaseth.

Sometimes he doth it, by cutting short their power of doing mischief: he chains up those madmen; and takes from them those swords, arrows, and fire-brands, which otherwise they might hurl abroad, both to their own and others' hurt. Sometimes, he raiseth up an opposite power against them, that they cannot break through to the commission of their sins: so the Jews would often have taken Christ and put him to death, but they feared the people, whom his miracles and cures had obliged unto him. Sometimes, Providence casts in some seasonable diversion: and thus he overruled Joseph's brethren: restraining them from killing him, by the providential passing by of merchants that way. And, sometimes, by removing the objects, against which they intended to sin: so Herod intended to put Peter to death; but, that very night, God sent his angel to work his escape, and prevented that wickedness. Many other ways there may be, of his exercising his sovereignty and dominion over his most rebellious creatures: who, though they are slaves to their lusts, yet God holds their chain in his own hand; slacking it by his permission, and sometimes straitening it by his powerful restraints. And, therefore, we find in Scripture, that God hath a certain measure for men's sins, beyond which they shall not exceed. Zech. v. there is mention made of an Ephah of Wickedness: and this signifies to us, that, though wicked men break the bounds of his laws, yet they cannot break the bounds of his providence: God hath set them their measure, which they can neither fill, without his permission; nor exceed, because of his restraint.

[3] God declares his kingdom to be over all, by inflicting deserved Punishments on the most stubborn and rebellious sinners.

Though they transgress his laws, and provoke his holiness; yet they shall never out-brave his justice: but he will certainly humble them; if not to repentance, yet to hell and perdition: Luke xix. 27; *Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.* And, therefore, we see how God hath erected trophies and monuments to the praise of his dread power and severe justice, out of the ruins of the most proud and insolent sinners. Pharaoh, who was both the great type and instrument of the Devil, how did God break that stubborn wretch with plague upon plague, and one misery after another! for, to this very purpose, God set him up, that he might show his signs and wonders

upon him. And thus God deals with many others, in this life, by some signal and remarkable punishments; making them examples to deter others from the like crimes. But thus he deals with all his rebels in hell; for even that is one, and a large part of his kingdom: it is his prison, wherein he hath shut up all his malefactors, whom his grim serjeant, death, hath arrested: it is the great slaughter-house of souls, and the shop of justice. Devils are there his executioners; and fire and rack and torments, the due guerdon of those impenitent rebels, who, shaking off his yoke and casting off his cords from them, are crushed for ever under the insupportable load of his wrath, and bound in chains of massy darkness, reserved for the Judgment of the Great Day.

Thus we see God's Universal Kingdom consists of three great provinces; Heaven, Earth, and Hell. In heaven, only grace and mercy reign: on earth, both mercy and justice, in the various dispensations of them towards the sons of men: in hell, pure and unmixed justice triumphs; in the eternal damnation of his apostate creatures. This is God's Universal Kingdom. But,

(2) Besides this, God hath a Peculiar Kingdom; and that is his Kingdom of Grace: which though it be not so large and extensive as the former, yet is it far more excellent; and the royalty of it is God's singular delight.

Now this Kingdom of Grace is his Church, and may be considered two ways. [1] In its growth and Progress. [2] In its Perfection and Consummation.

In the former respect, it is the Church Militant here upon earth; and, in the latter, it is the Church Triumphant in heaven: for both make up but one kingdom, under divers respects.

[1] Let us a little consider God's Kingdom here upon Earth, or the Church Militant. And that is twofold, Visible and Invisible.

1st. The Visible Kingdom of God upon earth, is a company of people openly professing the fundamentals of religion; and those truths necessary to salvation, which God hath made known unto the world: and joining together in the external communion of ordinances.

2dly. The Invisible Kingdom, is a company of true believers, who have internal and invisible communion with God, by his Spirit and their faith.

The Visible Church is of a much larger extent than the Invisible: for it comprehends hypocrites and formalists; and all those, who have given up their names to Christ, and listed themselves under his banner, and make an outward profession of the truth, although by their lives and practices they contradict and deny what

they own and profess with their lips. These belong to the kingdom of God's grace, as to the external dispensation and regiment of it: because they profess obedience to his laws, and live under the means of grace; by which many of them, through the efficacious concurrence of the Spirit of God, are translated into the Invisible Kingdom of his dear Son.

Now this Visible Kingdom of God upon earth, is but an imperfect state and condition: for, though all that are members of it are selected and taken out of the world, yet there is a great deal of mixture and dross, and many things that do offend. For,

(1st.) There is in it a mixture of wicked persons, with those that are really holy.

Many are of this kingdom, only because their consciences are convinced of the truth of the Christian Religion, although their lives are not subject to the power of it: and these are taken out of the world, only as they are brought into the pale of the Church; and profess the name of Christ and his religion, as distinct from all other religions in the world. And therefore we find the Church, or the Kingdom of Heaven, in Scripture, frequently compared to a Net cast into the sea, gathering every kind of fish, both good and bad; Matt. xiii. 47: both sorts are embraced in the bosom of this net; and no perfect separation can be made, until it be drawn to shore, at the Day of Judgment; and then the good will be gathered into vessels, and the bad cast away, as it is there expressed. Again, it is compared to a Floor, wherein is both chaff and wheat; Luke iii. 17: and these will be mixed together until the last discriminating day; and then shall the wheat be gathered into the garner, and the chaff burnt up with unquenchable fire. Again, it is compared to a Field, wherein there grows tares as well as corn; Matt. xii. 24: which must grow together until the harvest; and then shall the tares be bound in bundles to be burnt, and the profitable grain be gathered into the barn. This hath still been and will be the mixed condition of God's Church on earth; wherein, through hyprocrisy and gross dissimulation, many, that are enemies to the cross of Christ, will yet go under that cognizance, and keep up a form of godliness, though they deny and hate the power of it.

(2dly.) There is, even in the Invisible Church here on earth, a great mixture too.

Those, who have a real and vital union to Christ, and maintain a spiritual communion with him; yet even they have a sad mixture of evil with all their good, of sin with all their grace and holiness: so that the Church is still imperfect, not only from a mixture of

persons, but from a mixture in persons. As we know but in part, so we love but in part; we fear, we obey God but in part. And, with our profession of faith, we had need also to prefer that humble petition, Mark ix. 24: *Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief.*

[2] The kingdom of God may be considered in its Perfection and consummation; and so, it is Triumphant in Heaven.

And this consists of such glorious Angels, as never fell; and of such glorified Saints, who are raised from their fall, and restored to a far better condition than what they had lost.

This is the most glorious part of God's kingdom. Here is his throne especially established: and here it is, that he displays himself in the splendor of his majesty; being surrounded by innumerable hosts of holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, who continually worship before him, with a most prostrate veneration, and give *honour, and glory, and praise to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

Now this kingdom is altogether free from those former imperfections and mixtures. There is no mixture of good and bad together; neither is there any mixture of bad in the good: but all are holy; and all as completely holy, as creatures can be: for into the New Jerusalem shall no unclean thing ever enter. There are neither temptations to try us, nor sins to defile us, nor sorrows to afflict us; but perfect joy and perfect purity: where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes; and all sin, the cause of those tears, rooted out of our hearts.

And, yet, if heaven itself may be liable to any defects, or capable of any additions, there seems at present to be wanting in it these two things.

1st. The Kingdom of Glory is not yet full: nor shall it be till the whole number of the elect shall be called; and the whole number of the called, glorified.

Many, as yet, are conflicting here below; and fitting themselves for their eternal reward. Many yet lie sleeping in their causes, unborn; whom God hath foreknown and predestinated unto eternal life: all of whom he will, in his due time, bring unto the possession of his heavenly kingdom, to complete the number of his glorious subjects. And therefore it is said, concerning the saints that are already in heaven, that *white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled:* Rev. vi. 11.

2dly. Those glorified saints, that are now in heaven, though their joys be perfect, yet their persons are not; but one part of them,

their bodies, continues still under the arrest of death and the power of the grave: but yet tney sleep in hope; and through that Mystical Union that there is between Jesus Christ and every scattered dust of a believer, they shall obtain a glorious and joyful resurrection. And then shall this heavenly kingdom be every way perfect: perfect in the full number of its subjects, and every subject perfect in his entire and complete reward: his soul made for ever blessed in the beatifical vision of God, and his body made inconceivably glorious by the redundancy of that glory that fills his soul; and both shall remain for ever with the Lord.

And thus you see what the Kingdom of God is; both universal and peculiar, the Kingdom of his Power, and the Kingdom of his Grace: and that, as it is Militant here on earth, both Visible and Invisible; and as it is Triumphant in heaven.

2. The next thing in order is, to shew *How this Kingdom of God is said to come.*

This word, *come,* implies that we pray for a Kingdom, that is yet in its progress; and hath not yet attained the highest pitch of that perfection, which is expected and desired: for that, which is yet to come, is not as yet arrived to that state in which it is to be. And, therefore, we do not so properly pray, that the Universal Kingdom of God should come; for his dominion over the creatures is actually the same, and shall be so for ever: but, more especially, we pray that the Peculiar Kingdom of God should come; and that, as to both parts of it, Militant and Triumphant. Now this Peculiar Kingdom is said to come in three respects.

(1) In respect of the Means of Grace and Salvation: for where these are rightly dispensed, (I mean the Holy Word and Sacraments) there is the Kingdom of God begun and erected; and therefore we find it called *the word of the kingdom:* Matt. xiii. 19.

(2) In respect of the Efficacy of those Means: when all ready and cordial obedience is yielded to the laws of God, then doth this Kingdom come, and the glory of it is advanced and increased.

(3) In respect of Perfection: and so it comes when the graces of the saints are strengthened and increased; when the souls of the godly, departing this life, are received into heaven; and when the whole number of them shall have their perfect consummation and bliss, in the glorification both of soul and body, after the General Resurrection. And thus we have seen how the kingdom of God may come.

3. In the next place, we must enquire, *What is it we pray for when we say, "Thy kingdom come."*

(1) I answer, there are various things which lie couched under this petition: as,

[1] We pray that God would be pleased to Plant his Church, where it is not: according to his promise, giving all the nations of the world to his Son for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession:

That the dark places and corners of the earth, that are yet the habitations of cruelty, may be illustrated with the glorious light of the Gospel shining into them: that God would reveal his Son to those poor wretched people, that sit in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death; and would rescue them from their blind superstitions and idolatries, and from the power of the Devil, who strongly works in the children of disobedience, and would translate them into the kingdom of his dear Son: especially, that he would remove the veil from the heart of the Jew, upon whom a sad judicial hardness hath long lain; that they, at length, may be brought into the unity and fulness of Christ's body: we pray that all the world, both Jews and Gentiles, may be gathered into one sheepfold, under Christ Jesus the great Pastor and Shepherd of Souls; so that, as God is one, so his name and service may be one throughout all the earth.

And thus we pray that Christ's Kingdom may come, in respect of the means of grace and salvation.

[2] This petition, *Thy kingdom come*, intimates our earnest desire that the Churches of Christ, where they are planted, may be increased in the numbers of the Faithful: that those, who are as yet enemies to the name and profession of Christ, may be brought into the Visible Church: and that those in it, who are yet strangers to a powerful work of grace, may, by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost, be brought in to be members of the Invisible Church. And thus we pray that God's Kingdom may come, in respect of the efficacy of the means of grace.

[3] We pray that all the Church of Christ, throughout the world may be kept from ruin. That they may not be overrun with superstition or idolatry: that God would not, in his wrath, remove his candlestick from them; as he hath, in his righteous judgment, done from other Churches, which were once glorious and splendid: we pray, likewise, that God would make up all breaches, and compose all differences, and silence all controversies; and cut off all those, who trouble the peace and rend the unity of the Church, breaking it into factions and schisms, which are the most fatal symptoms and portenders of God's withdrawing himself, and carrying away his gospel, and giving it to another people, who will better bring forth the fruits of it, which are peace, meekness, and love; and, if in any thing Christians be diversely minded, that God would be pleased

to reveal it unto them; and that *whereunto* they *have attained*, they *may walk by the same rule, and mind the same things.*

And thus we pray that Christ's Kingdom may come, in respect of its perfection and entireness.

[4] It intimates our humble requests to God, that his ordinances may be purely and powerfully dispensed.

Hence, as I noted before, the Word is called *the word of the kingdom:* Matt. xiii. 19, that is, the Word, whereby we are brought into the Kingdom of Christ here on earth, and fitted for his Triumphant Kingdom in heaven. It is the means of our new birth; the seed of our spiritual life. And, as a kingdom cannot be well established or governed without good laws; so, for the government of his kingdom, Christ hath established laws, which are contained in the records of the Holy Scriptures. And, as his word is the law, so his sacraments are the seals of his kingdom; for, to every believing partaker, God doth, under his seal, confirm the grant of heaven and eternal salvation. And, therefore, in this petition we pray also,

That God would give his Church able Ministers of the New Testament, that may know how rightly to divide the word of truth, and to give every one his portion in due season: and that he would be pleased to accompany the outward administration of his ordinances with the inward operations of his Spirit, which alone can make them effectual to turn men from darkness to light, and to bring them from the power of Satan unto God: that the whole number of God's elect may, in his due time, be brought in by the means, which he hath appointed and sanctified for their conversion and salvation.

These are the chief and principal things, that we beg of God for the Church Militant, when we say, *Thy kingdom come*, viz., that it may attain a perfection of extent: and be planted, where it is not, to a perfection of number: and may gain more proselytes and converts, where it is planted to a perfection of establishment; that they may not be rooted out by the violence of men nor abandoned through the judgment of God: and to a perfection of purity and holiness, by the powerful dispensation of gospel-ordinances, attended by the efficacious concurrence of the Holy Spirit. But,

(2) This petition likewise respects the Church Triumphant in heaven.

Nor is this praying for the dead; a thing, justly condemned as superstition and folly: for we pray not for them to alter their state, which is impious and ridiculous, and a foppish consequent upon the figment of purgatory; but we pray for the Church Triumphant only in general, that those things, which are as yet defective in it, may

be supplied: for, certainly, wheresoever there is any kind of imperfection, we have ground to pray for the removal of it; especially, when God hath encouraged us to it by promise that he will remove it. And, therefore,

[1] We may well pray, that the whole Body Mystical of Jesus Christ, and every member of it, may be brought to the full fruition of heaven and happiness; that daily more may be admitted into the heavenly fellowship, till their numbers as well as their joys be consummate. And,

[2] We may pray, that the bodies of all the Saints, that have slept in their beds of earth from the beginning of the world, may be raised again out of the dust, and united to their souls, and for ever be made glorious in the kingdom of heaven.

For both these things are absolutely promised: the one Rom. viii. 29, 30, that those, whom God hath *called* and *justified*, he will likewise *glorify:* and the other is. 1 Thess. iv. 16, *the dead in Christ shall rise.* And, certainly, whatsoever may be the object of our faith and hope may be the subject of our prayers. And this every true Christian longs and breathes after, that these days of sin and misery may be shortened; that Christ would come in his glory; that, his Mediatory Kingdom being fulfilled, it might be delivered up unto the Father; and that we all might be one, as the Father is in him, and he in the Father, *Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

And thus I have finished the Second Petition, *Thy kingdom come.*

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iii. The THIRD follows: *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

This now follows upon the former, in a most rational and admirable method: for, as, before, we pray that the Kingdom of God might come, as the best adapted means to Hallow his Name; so, now, we pray that his will may be done by us, as the clearest declaration that we are the subjects of his kingdom. Now here are considerable. 1. The petition itself: *thy will be done in earth.* 2. The measure and proportion of it: *as it is in heaven.*

1. I shall begin with the *Petition,* in which every word carries great weight and moment.

And, therefore, in the explication of it I shall show you, (1) What this will of God is. (2) How this will may be said to be done. (3) What force this particle *thy,* thy will, carries in it, and what it denotes. (4) What is meant by God's will being done in earth. And all these with all perspicuity and brevity.

(1) What this will of God is.

Now the will of God is commonly and very well distinguished, into the will of his purpose, and into the will of his precept; his decrees, or his commands: the former respect what shall be done by him; the latter, what ought to be done by us. Both these, in Scripture, are frequently called the will of God.

[1] God's Purpose is his will.

Yea, it is more properly his will than his precepts are: for by this God doth absolutely determine, what shall be, and what shall not be; and all things in the world take their place and are ranged in their several stations, and the whole series of causes and effects are governed, by the ordination and appointment of this his Sovereign will. And, therefore, it is said, Eph, i. 11, that God *worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.* And, Ps. cxxxv. 6, *whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places.* This is God's will of purpose, whereby he guides and governs all events whatsoever; so that there is not the most inconsiderable occurrence that happens, not the least flight of a sparrow nor the falling off of a hair, nor the motion of an atom in the air, or a dust or a sand on the earth, but, as it is effected by his power and providence, so it was determined by his will and counsel.

[2] The Precepts and Commands are likewise the will of God.

But they are improperly so called; because these concern not, neither do they determine, the event of things, but only our duty; not what shall be, but what ought to be: and it is called, Rom, xii. 2, the *good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* This is all contained in the Holy Scripture, which are a perfect system of precepts given us for the government of our lives here, and for the attaining of eternal life hereafter; and therefore, it is likewise called his Revealed will; whereas, the other, namely, the will of purpose, is God's Secret Will, until it be manifested unto us by the events and effects of it.

[3] Now concerning this distinction of God's will of purpose and precept, we may note,

1st. That though there be a great deal of difference, yet there is no contrariety or opposition between them.

(1st.) They differ the one from the other, not in respect of God; for his will is one infinitely pure and uncompounded act: but only in respect of the Object.

For there are many things, which God wills by his Will of Purpose, which he has not willed by his Will of Precept. His Precepts are all holy, and command nothing but what is holy and acceptable: *This is the will of God,* saith the apostle, *even your sanctification*; 1 Thess. iv. 3: it is the highest degree of blasphemy, to

impute unto God, that he hath commanded us any thing but what is holy, just, and good: this were to make him the author of sin who hath declared himself the punisher of it. But his Will of Purpose is not restrained within bounds and limits; but extendeth itself to all events whatsoever, whether good or evil.

And, as evils are of two sorts, either the evil of punishment or the evil of sin; so is God's Will of Purpose twofold: effective of the one and permissive of the other: but in both most certain and infallible.

[1st.] God's Will of Purpose doth effect and bring to pass the evil of punishment: Amos iii. 6, *Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?* For he doth, both in heaven and in earth, whatsoever pleaseth him. Were it not the will of God, the world had never groaned under so many miseries and calamities, as have in all ages befallen it. Now God never enjoins us this as our duty, although he lays them upon us as our burden.

[2dly.] God's Will of Purpose permits the evil of sin, for wise and gracious ends; that he may bring good out of evil. Even those very sins and wickedness, which his Will of Precept forbids, his Will of Purpose permits: for, if God did not will to permit them, there would be no such thing as sin in the world.

(2dly.) Hence ariseth another very remarkable difference:

That we may effectually resist God's Will of Precept, so as to hinder the accomplishment of it: but whatsoever we do so it is our sin; and will, without repentance, be our condemnation. So Stephen accuseth the Jews: Acts vii. 51, *you do always resist the Holy Ghost;* that is, by your practices you do always go contrary to the commands of God, revealed by his Spirit in his word. And, were it not for this resisting of the will of God, we should be perfectly holy and blameless.

But we cannot resist the Will of God's Purpose, so as to hinder the execution of it; although sometimes to endeavour it, may be so far from sin, as to be our necessary and indispensable duty. For, though it may be the will of God to bring us into poverty or into prison, or to lay sore diseases upon us: yet, it is not only lawful for us, but we are obliged as far as lies in us, to hinder these evils of punishment from befalling us; and to preserve our estates, our liberty, our health, and all our outward comforts, by all lawful and allowed ways and means. Much more, if God should will to permit a sin in others or in ourselves, are we bound to hinder the commission of it: for, for us to be willing to permit, because God is, though it be a conformity of our wills to God's Will of Purpose, yet this is not our rule to walk by; and it is a wretched

rebellion against his Will of Precept, which alone we are to respect in all our actions, and endeavour to conform ourselves unto. Doubtless, it was God's Will of Purpose, that Christ, the Lord of Life and Glory, should be crucified; but yet the Jews, conforming themselves according to this will, were guilty of the most horrid wickedness that ever was committed in the world: for both these we have confirmed to us, Acts ii. 23, *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.* Although it was by the determinate counsel and will of God, that Christ should be taken and slain; yet, nevertheless, they were wicked hands that were imbrued in that precious and inestimable blood.

And thus I have shown how the Will of God's Purpose and Precept do differ. But, yet,

2dly. Although there be this great difference, yet is there no contrariety or repugnance, but a perfect harmony and uniformity between them.

Some have thought, that if God will, such a thing should be done, as, for instance, the crucifying of our Lord and Saviour, by his Will of Purpose; and yet wills that it should not be done, by his Will of Precept; that these two wills must needs contradict one another: and this argument some do make no small use of, to explode the distinction of the will of God.

But the solution is most easy. For when wills are contrary to each other, there must be a willing and a nilling of the same thing. But it is not so here: for the object of God's Will of Purpose is event; but of his Will of Precept, duty. Now it is far enough from having any shadow of a contradiction, for God to will or permit that to be, which he hath willed or commanded us not to do. Indeed, to will such an event to be and not to be, that such a thing shall be my duty and shall not be my duty, are contradictions, and not to be imputed unto God: but to will that such a thing shall eventually be, and yet to will that it shall be my duty to endeavour to hinder it, is so far from being a contradiction, that it is most apparent and evident, and falls out most frequently in our ordinary converse in the world. So, in the forementioned famous instance of the death of Christ: God willed, by his Will of Purpose, that it should so come to pass in all the circumstances of it as it was perpetrated; but then he willed, by his Will of Precept, that it should be their duty not to do it. Now, certainly, there is no contradiction or absurdity, that duty and event may be quite contrary one to the other: unless we could take away all sin, and

authorize all the greatest villainies that ever were committed under the sun. And thus much for the first head.

(2) And, having thus seen what the will of God is, the next general is to enquire, what will it is we pray may be done, when we say, *Thy will be done.* And, here,

[1] It is clear, that we especially and absolutely pray that the Will of God's Precept may be done, and that, not only by us, but by all men: for this will of God is the rule of our obedience, and according to it we ought to conform all our actions.

And, because we are not sufficient of ourselves so much as to think any thing of ourselves, much less to perform all those various and weighty duties of holiness which God hath enjoined us in his word, therefore our Saviour hath taught us to beg of God grace and assistance to enable us to fulfil his will; giving us, not only commands of obedience, but promises for our relief and encouragement; instructing us, in the word, to crave supplies of grace from him, who hath required duty from us.

And, indeed, there is a great deal of reason we should pray that his Will of Precept should be done on earth, if we consider, 1st., The great reluctancy and opposition of corrupt nature against it.

The Law is spiritual; but we are *carnal,* and *sold under sin:* Rom. vii. 14; and, in the best of men there is a *law in* their *members, warring against the law of* their *minds;* that, when they would do good, evil is present with them: and therefore we have need to pray, that God would incline our hearts to his commandments, and then strengthen us to obey them; that, as our will to good is the effect of his grace, so the effect of our wills may be the performance of his will.

2dly. God's glory is deeply concerned in the doing of his will.

For it is the glory of a king to have his laws obeyed. And so is it God's. When we profess ourselves to be his subjects, and pray that his kingdom may come, it is but fit and rational, that we should pray likewise, *thy will be done,* without which this his Kingdom of Grace would be but merely titular; for his word is the sceptre and law of his kingdom: and, if we yield not obedience to it, we do tacitly condemn it, and the law-maker also, of injustice; and thereby reflect a most intolerable disparagement upon God, preferring the will of Satan and of our own lusts, before his most holy and righteous will. But when we endeavour to yield obedience to his commands, and pray that we may be able to do it with more diligence and constancy, this, as it pleaseth, so it glorifieth God: for by so doing, we acknowledge both his sovereignty and his equity,

his sovereignty, in that he may require of us what he pleaseth; and his equity, in that he requireth of us nothing but what is most just and fit: and therefore our Saviour tells us, John xv. 8, *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.*

2dly. Our own interest is deeply concerned in it.

For, through obedience and doing the will of God, it is, that we come to inherit the promises: Rev. xxii. 14, *Blessed are they, that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* And therefore to pray, that God's will may be done by us, is but to pray that we ourselves may be fitted and prepared for eternal life and glory, unto which we can no otherwise attain, but by holiness and obedience.

Oh, think but to what an excellency doth grace advance the soul even in this life; and makes Christians as much above other men, as other men are above beasts: that when they are employed about the foul and nasty offices of sin, hurried by their vile passions unto vile and base actions, raking in the mire and filth of all manner of uncleanness, and defiling their soul with those sins which will hereafter damn them; thy work should be all spiritual, consisting of the same pure employments that the holy angels and glorified saints in heaven spend their eternity in. Consider what a high honour and privilege it is, that you should be admitted to attend immediately upon the service of the King of kings: you are called to wait about his throne, his Throne of Grace, to which you have always free access to converse and commune with God, by maintaining fellowship with him in the performance of holy duties; which is a dignity so high, that human nature is capable but of one preferment more, and that is of being removed from one throne to the other, from attending on the Throne of Grace to attend on the Throne of Glory. And then think, O soul, if it be possible to think, what neither eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard, neither hath it, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive: think how transcendently blessed thy estate shall be, when the will of thy God, which was here thy duty, shall there be thy nature; when thy obligation to do it, shall be turned into a happy necessity of doing it; when all thy thoughts and affections shall be centered in God for ever, and not the least motion of thy soul shall so much as twinkle or waver from the eternal comtemplation and fruition of the Infinite Deity. And, therefore, this our eternal happiness being wrapt up in doing the will of God, it highly concerns us to pray, that it may be done; and to endeavour to do it on earth, so as that at length we may attain to the perfection of doing it in heaven.

And this is the first thing, that, in this petition, we especially and absolutely pray for, viz., that God's Will of Precept may be done by us on earth.

[2] It is more doubtful, whether we are simply to pray that God's Will of Purpose should be done. And that,

1st. Because the Will of God's Purpose is secret and unknown, and therefore cannot so immediately concern us in point of duty: for *secret things belong unto God, but revealed* things *belong unto us and to our children*: Deut. xxix. 29.

2dly. Because this Will of God shall, within the periods set by his eternal decrees, have its most perfect and full accomplishment. For, though his Revealed Will may be resisted and hindered, yet neither men nor devils can hinder his secret will and the purposes of his counsels: these shall take place, maugre all their spite and oppositions; and therefore it seems not altogether so proper matter for our prayers.

3dly. Many things come to pass by the Will of God's Purpose, which we ought not to pray for; yea, which we ought to pray against.

As, not to instance in God's Will of permitting the sins and wickednesses of men, which, beyond all exceptions, we ought to deprecate: let us but consider, common charity obligeth us not to pray for any evil of suffering to befall either ourselves or others: and yet we know that it is oftentimes the Will of God's Purpose, to bring great and sore judgments upon kingdoms, and upon families and persons. And if we may indefinitely pray that this will should be done, this would be nothing else but to pray for the death and ruin of many thousands, whom yet the Revealed Will of God commands us to pray for, and to desire all good and prosperity to them.

But yet, notwithstanding all this, we may doubtless pray, that the Will of God's Purpose may be done, so far as it brings to pass those things, which we are obliged to pray for by the Will of his Precept. We may pray, that God's will may be fulfilled, in giving peace and prosperity and good things, both temporal and spiritual, unto others and to ourselves; but simply and absolutely to pray, that this will should be done in whatsoever it respects, would be as often a curse as a prayer: since, as I told you before, there is no evil comes to pass, whether of sin or punishment, but it is by God's Will permitting the one and effecting the other.

But you will say, "Do we not find frequent examples in Scripture, of holy men who have prayed that God's will might be done, even in the bringing to pass that which was evil?" Thus Eli, when Samuel had denounced fearful judgments both against himself and

against his house. *It is the Lord,* says he: *let him do what seemeth him good:* 1 Sam. iii. 18. And so David, when persecuted by the unnatural rebellion of his son Absalom: *If he say thus,* behold *I have no delight in* him, *let him do as seemeth good unto him:* 2 Sam. xv. 26. And thus the disciples, when, upon Agabus's prophecy what afflictions should happen unto St. Paul at Jerusalem, they would have persuaded him from going thither, but could not prevail, conclude all with this, *The will of the Lord be done:* Acts. xxi. 14. And thus likewise our great example, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, when he had prayed that the bitter cup of his passion might pass away from him, he seems to correct himself and make another prayer, *Not my will, but thine, be done;* Luke xxii. 42. Although he knew this will of God could not be done without his own most extreme sufferings, nor without the horrid sin and wickedness of his murderers.

But to all these instance I answer, That they are not so much prayers, as declarations of a ready submission and obedience to the will of God. For by this expression, *The will of the Lord be done,* we do not desire that those things should come to pass, which will be grievous and afflicting to us; but only testify our ready subjection to the sovereign will of God, and a patient resignation of ourselves and of all our concerns unto his disposal. When we pray, we ought to beg of God, that he would be pleased to avert from us those plagues and judgments which our sins justly expose us unto: but if it shall seem good to him to inflict any of them upon us, *The will of the Lord be done:* that is, we desire with patience to submit unto his providence, and contentedly to bear those burthens which he shall impose upon us.

The sum, therefore, of all this is: when we pray *Thy will be done;* if it be the Will of God's Precept, we pray absolutely that it may be done by us, as being obliged thereunto by his express word and command; and if it be the Will of God's Purpose, intending any temporal or spiritual good unto us, we pray that his will may be done upon us; but if it be the Will of his Purpose to inflict any evil, then our saying, *Thy will be done,* is not so much a prayer, as a testimony of our submission to his will without murmuring or repining at his Providence.

Thus we have seen what this will of God is, that we pray may be done in this petition, *Thy will be done.*

(3) The next thing to be taken notice of, is the particle, *thy:* THY *will be done:*

And this carries in it, both an emphasis and an exclusion.

[1] *Thy* will, Emphatically to signify unto us, that God's will

ought to be preferred above and before all others'; not to regard the fancies and humours of men, when the will of God is clear before us; not to be careful to please them, but our Lord Christ: and, if they will quarrel with us upon any such account, we know whither to appeal for our justification and for our safety. For our justification, to their consciences: Whether we ought to obey men rather than God, judge ye: Acts iv. 19. And for our protection and safety, to God's power and providence, with those three heroic persons, Dan. iii. 16, 17, *We are not careful,* O King, *to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand.*

And there is great reason for this preference of God's will before all others.

1st. Because God's will is most Sovereign. He is the Supreme Lord of the Whole World: the greatest of men are but his subjects and vassals. Now it is infinitely more reason, that we should conform ourselves to the will of him who is both our Lord and theirs, than to the will of our fellow-servants; and that we should seek to please him who is able to destroy both our souls and theirs, than that we should please them, who, when their rage reacheth highest, can destroy only this body and vile carcase.

2dly. Because God's will is the most Holy and Perfect: and there is nothing, that he hath commanded us to do, but it hath a native goodness and excellency in it; and therefore it is called, the *good,* the *acceptable, and perfect will of God:* Rom. xii. 2. To be governed by our own or other men's wills, is usually to be led by passion, and blind, headlong affections; but, to give up ourselves wholly to the will of God, is to be governed by the highest reason in the world: for his will cannot but be good, since it is the measure and rule of goodness itself; for therefore things are said to be good, because God wills them. And whatsoever he requires of us, is pure, and equitable, and most agreeable to the dictates of right and illuminated reason: so that we act most like men, when we act most like Christians; and show ourselves most rational, when we show ourselves most religious. And therefore we have a great deal of reason to say, *Thy will be done.*

[2] As this particle, *thy,* may be taken emphatically, *thy* will before all others; so likewise it may be taken Exclusively, *thy* will and not our own be done: to teach us that hard lesson of self-denial.

Indeed, when we consider the rebellions of our corrupt appetites and desires, and all those tumults and uproars they raise in our souls against the holy and perfect will of God; the perverse disputings

of our reason against his authority, and those strong propensions that are in us towards that which is displeasing to him, and destructive to ourselves; we shall find abundant need, with our greatest fervency to pray, *Thy Will* and not our own *be done.*

And thus I have finished the three first enquiries, what this will of God is, how it may be said to be done, and what is imported in this particle, *thy.*

(4) The last thing to be enquired into, is, what is meant by God's will being *done on earth.*

And here, briefly to resolve this, that the will of God should be done on earth, signifies that it be done by men living on the earth; the place here being put for the persons in it. And, although there be several other creatures besides man, who do all of them serve him and fulfil his will, according to the rank and station which they all hold; and therefore we have it expressed, Ps. cxlviii. 8, *Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling his word:* yet this his Will and Word is only the ordinance of their creation: and the Will of his Purpose, to the effecting of which they are often employed as instruments; it is not the Will of God's Precept obliging them to duty; for this can be fulfilled by none but by rational and intelligent creatures. This petition therefore, especially, if not only, respects us men, whom God hath made lords of this earth, putting all other creatures in subjection under us. Now here we pray,

[1] That all men in the world, renouncing the will of Satan and their own corrupt wills, may readily subject themselves unto the will of God.

For this expression, *on earth,* suffers us not to limit our prayers to this or that particular place or region; but, wheresoever God hath spread abroad all nations upon the face of the earth, we are to desire of God for them grace to enable them to do his will: Ps. lxvii. 2, Let *thy way be known upon earth,* and *thy saving health unto all nations.*

[2] We pray, that we may employ and improve the few and short days of this mortal life to the best advantage.

For this is that day, wherein we may work the works of God: and, if we neglect to do the will of God while we are here on earth, it will be too late for ever; *for there is no work,* nor operation, *nor device in the grave whither* we are going.

And, certainly, if ever we would do the will of God in heaven, we must accustom ourselves to do it here on earth. Here we are as apprentices, that must learn the trade of holiness; that, when our time is out, we may be fit to be made free denizens of the New Jerusalem. Here, we are to tune our voices to the praises of God, before we

come to join with the heavenly choir. Here, we are to learn, what we must there for ever practice. And thus I have done with the Petition itself: *Thy will be done in earth.*

2. The next thing observable, is the *proportion* of it: *as it is in heaven.*

But you will say, "Is it not utterly impossible, while we are here on earth, and clogged with earthly bodies, and encompassed about with manifold infirmities; is it not impossible, ever to attain unto a celestial and heavenly perfection in our obedience?"

I answer, true, it is so: but yet this prayer is not in vain; for it teacheth and engageth us, to aim at and endeavour after the perfect holiness of angels and the *spirits of just men made perfect.* We are commanded to be *holy as God is holy,* and *to be perfect as* our *Heavenly Father is perfect,* whose perfection is impossible for us to equalize: yet these excessive commands have their use, to raise up our endeavours to a higher strain and pitch, than if we were commanded somewhat within our own power: as he, that aims at a star, is likely to shoot much higher than he, that aims at a turf.

Thus, though it be a thing altogether impossible for us in this life to attain to an angelical perfection in our obedience: yet the command that obligeth us to it and our prayers for it, are not in vain: because, by our utmost endeavours after further measures and degrees of holiness, we may very much assimilate our obedience to that obedience, that is yielded to God's will in heaven itself: and therefore this particle, *as,* is rather a note of similitude than of equality. But, though our obedience on earth cannot be equal to the obedience, that is yielded to God in heaven; yet we pray that it may bear as much similitude, proportion, and conformity unto it, as it is possible for us to attain unto while we are here in the body.

And, therefore, that we may the more fully understand what it is we pray for, when we present this petition to God, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,* we shall briefly enquire, how the holy angels and blessed spirits do the will of God in heaven. And,

(1) Their obedience is absolutely Perfect; and that, both with a perfection of parts and degrees.

They do all that God enjoins them; not failing in the least tittle of observance: and therefore they are said, to *follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth:* Rev. xiv. 4. Hence it is ascribed to them, as their proper and peculiar character, Ps. ciii. 20, *Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.* And, again, they do the whole will of God with all their might, with all their mind, with the greatest intention that is possible, even to an angelical nature: never are they remiss

in their service, or slack in their attendance; but are continually blessing and praising God, standing ready to receive and execute his commands and commissions.

Now when we pray that we may do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven, we pray for this heavenly temper; that we may bear an universal respect unto all God's commandments: no more sticking or pausing at any thing that God requires of us, than an angel or a glorified saint would do; but, enfolding all our interest and concerns in God's glory, might respect nor value nothing but what tends to the promotion of that. This is to do God's will, as the angels do it in heaven.

(2) Their obedience is Cheerful: not extorted from them by violent constraints of fear or of suffering; but it is their eternal delight, and their service is their felicity.

And thus should we pray and endeavour to do the will of God with alacrity and cheerfulness: not being hauled to it, as our task; but esteeming the commands of God to be, as the angels do, our glory and our great reward.

But, alas, how infinitely short do we fall of our pattern! We think the Sabbath long, and ordinances long and tedious, and are secretly glad when they are over: and what should such as we are do in heaven, where there is a sabbath as long as eternity, and nothing but holiness there? And, therefore, we had need pray earnestly, that God would now fit and prepare us for the work of heaven, while we are here on earth; for else heaven will not be heaven, or a place of happiness unto us.

(3) The will of God is done in heaven with Zeal and Ardency. And therefore it is said, Ps. civ. 4, that God maketh his angels and messengers a flame of fire.

And have not we abundance of need to pray for conformity with them, in this respect also? We do the will of God so coldly and indifferently, that we ourselves scarce take notice of what we are doing. We often bring sacrifices to God, and either bring no fire with us, but are frozen and dull; or else offer them up with strange wild-fire, and usually are heated more with passion and irregular affections, than with holy and pious zeal. And,

(4) The will of God is done in heaven with Celerity and Ready Dispatch. They are quick in executing the commands of the great God and their Lord; and therefore are said to have wings, and to fly: Is. vi. 2. And this expression of wings, and the flying of cherubims and angels, is frequently mentioned in Scripture, only to intimate to us the expedition they use in the service of God.

But, alas, how dull and slow are we! How long do we consult with flesh and blood; and are disputing the will of our Sovereign Lord, when we should be obeying it! When we are clearly convinced that such a duty is necessary to be done, how many delays and excuses, and procrastinations do we make; being willing to stay the leisure of every vile lust and vain impertinency; thinking it then time enough to serve God, when we have nothing else to do! Certainly, this is not to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven; where, upon the first intimations of God's will, they take wings and execute it speedily.

(5) The will of God is done in heaven with all possible Prostration, Reverence, and Humility,

And therefore it is said, Rev. iv. 10, that *the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.* Crowns are themselves ensigns of majesty: but here they cast their very crowns, all their dignity and glory, at the feet of God; and make their chiefest excellency itself do homage to him, that is *King of kings and Lord of lords.*

And so should we, in all our serving of God, do it with reverence and godly fear: preserving upon our hearts an awful sense and regard of the Dreadful Majesty, before whom we appear.

(6) The will of God is done in heaven with Constancy and Perseverance.

They serve God *day and night;* Rev. vii 15, and are never weary of his work, no more than they are of their own happiness; for his service is their happiness, and their obedience their glory.

And thus should we pray and endeavour that we might do the will of God, constantly and perseveringly: for it is perseverance, that crowns all other graces; and God hath promised to crown our perseverance with glory and eternal life.

And thus we see briefly in these Six Particulars, how the will of God is done in heaven.

To conclude this: is there no other nor lower pattern set us, than the perfect obedience of angels and glorified spirits? Let us not then content ourselves with a comparative obedience; and, by measuring ourselves with those that are worse, think highly of our own perfections. Let us not applaud ourselves with the boasting Pharisee, with a *Lord, I thank thee, I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjust, adulterers.* What is this to the pattern, that God hath set us for our imitation? Perhaps, thou dost but all this while compare thyself with those that are in hell, and dost God's will not much

better than such have done, if this be all that thou canst plead for thyself: whereas God hath set three examples, for thy imitation, in heaven. Dost thou endeavour to do his will as Seraphims and Cherubims, and the whole host of blessed Spirits? Thou livest, it may be, not so like a devil as others do; but dost thou live like an angel? Dost thou serve God with the same proportionable Zeal, Ardency, Delight, and Constancy, as those holy spirits do, who always stand in the presence of God, ready pressed to do his will: if not, neither endeavourest after so high a degree of obedience and purity, know that thy imitation of any lower example than that of heaven, can never suffice to bring thee to heaven.

And thus I have finished the Three First Petitions of this Excellent Prayer: namely those that relate unto God; for the petitions contained herein, as I said in the beginning, were such as immediately concerned God's glory, or such as immediately concerned our good. The first I have already considered.

I now come to treat of those petitions, which immediately concern our own good: and that is either our temporal or our spiritual good.

Our Temporal Good, in praying for our daily bread:

Our Spiritual Good in the two last petitions, wherein we pray for the forgiveness of our sins past, and for deliverance from sin for time to come.

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iv. I begin with the first of these our requests or petitions for temporal blessings, contained in the FOURTH petition: *Give us this day our daily bread.* And here I shall consider,

First, the order; and, then, the petition itself.

1. The *Order.* And that is remarkable upon two accounts.

(1) Whereas this petition is placed in the midst, and encompassed about with others that relate unto spiritual blessings; so that, after we have prayed for the glory of God, our Saviour teacheth us to make mention of our temporal wants, and so to pass on again to beg spiritual mercies for our souls: this may instruct us, in the government of our lives, to use worldly comforts as here we pray for them.

Spiritual and heavenly things are our greatest concernment, and should be our greatest care. With these we should begin, and with these we should end. Only God allows us the world as an inn: we may call in at it, and refresh ourselves with the comforts and accommodations that we find; but we must not dwell nor set up our rest there. We are all strangers and pilgrims upon earth: heaven

is our country, and thither we are travelling; only, in our journey, we may call and bait at the world, and take what we find provided for us with sobriety and thankfulness. And therefore this bread, that we here pray for, is elsewhere called the staff of bread: Ps. cv.16, *He break the whole staff of bread:* Ezek v. 16, *I will break your staff of bread.* And all this is to put us in mind, that we are to ask for and to use these earthly enjoyments only as travellers, that make use of a staff for their help and support, whilst they are in their passage home. And we are hereby also taught, to crave no more than will suffice for our convenient supplies: otherwise we make our staff our burden, and our support itself a load and pressure.

(2) It is observable, that, though we are commanded, to *seek first the kingdom of God and* his *righteousness*, with a promise that all other earthly things shall be added to us; yet here our Saviour places the petition for temporal blessings, before the two petitions we present to God for spiritual blessings. And this order hath seemed so strange and incongruous to some, that, hereupon alone, they have been moved to affirm that this bread, which we here ask, is not any temporal good thing, but the Bread of Life, even Jesus Christ himself; as shall be shown more, by and by.

Now this order doth not intimate to us, that earthly blessings are better and more considerable than heavenly; or that they should have the preference in our esteem or desires; (I hope there are none of us so brutish, nor so far degenerated into beasts, as to account the poor enjoyments of this life, more valuable than the pardon of sin, and those spiritual mercies that are in a tendency to eternal life and happiness:) But,

[1] Our Saviour useth this method in his prayer, in conformity to the method of Divine Providence towards us, which first gives us life and the necessities of it, and then orders us spiritual and heavenly blessings, as an accession and happy addition to those natural good things he bestows upon us.

[2] Because we are usually more sensible of our temporal than of our spiritual wants, our Saviour therefore doth by degrees raise up our desires by the one to the other: for, seeing we are commanded to pray for the supply even of our temporal necessities, which are but trivial in regard of the necessities of our souls; we cannot but be convinced, that we ought to be much more earnest and importunate with God for spiritual mercies than for temporal, by how much our spiritual wants are more important and of vaster consequence than our temporal.

When, therefore, thou comest to this petition, think with thyself,

O Christian, If I must pray fervently and affectionately for my daily bread, which can only nourish my vile carcase for a few short years; a carcase, that must, notwithstanding all these recruits, shortly moulder into dust, and itself become meat for worms: how much more importunate ought I to be, for the pardon of my sins, and those spiritual mercies and blessings without which my precious and immortal soul must eternally perish! since Christ hath commanded us not to labour, and by consequence not to pray *for that meat which perisheth*, with any comparative industry and earnestness to our labouring and praying *for that which endureth to eternal life*. And thus much concerning the Order of this petition.

2 In the *Petition* itself we have, (1) The Matter of it, or that which we pray for: *Give us* BREAD. (2) The Kind, or Quality of it: called here, DAILY *bread*. (3) Our Right and Property in it: OUR *daily bread*. (4) The Limitation of it in respect of Time: *give it us* THIS-DAY. Of all these briefly.

(1) The Matter of this petition, or that which we pray for, and that is bread; *Give us our bread.*

By Bread here is meant all temporal and earthly blessings that contribute either to our being or our well-being in this life. And, because we have need of very many things for our present subsistence, as food, raiment, habitation, and each of these comprehend many other necessaries in them; all of which would have been too long particularly to enumerate in this compendious prayer: therefore our Saviour hath summed them up in the word *bread;* figuratively denoting all kinds of provisions necessary for this natural life, whereof bread is the most usual and the most useful. And therefore, as when God speaks of a famine, he calls it *a famine of bread:* Amos viii. 11; not as if a scarcity of bread were the only dearth intended by it, but that there should be likewise a want of all things requisite to the sustentation of life: so here, when Christ teacheth us to pray for our *daily bread*, this phrase extendeth to all things conducible to maintain health, or to recover it; to preserve life, or to prolong it.

Some, indeed, think this too mean and sordid a request to be preferred to God: and would not have any of the low conveniences of this present life to have any place in a prayer, all whose other parts are so spiritual and heavenly, and the whole so short and compendious. Where the petitions are so few, they will not believe any of them should be spent so trivially, as to beg that, which, though they might not attain, yet they might be eternally blessed and happy: and therefore they interpret this word *bread* in a spir-

itual sense; and take it for the food of the soul, whereby it is nourished unto eternal life; and especially for our Lord Jesus Christ, who is called *the bread of life:* John vi. 35; and *living bread, which came down from heaven:* verse 51.

But here seemeth no place for any such mystical interpretation; the word *bread* being put without any addition or like circumstance, that might refer it to Christ or to spirtual things; and, therefore, ought to be understood according to the words literally, and in their ordinary signification: although, indeed, it be here used by way of synecdoche, one part of temporal good things being put for the whole accession of them. Now from this we are taught these three things.

[1] That temporal mercies and blessings may lawfully be prayed for.

And, although we ought not to be most earnest and importunate, nor to enlarge and expatiate most upon these requests; but more earnestly to covet the best gifts: yet neither is it unworthy of a Christian, whose affections and conversation is in heaven, to beg at God's hands those mercies, that he knows needful for the support and comfort of this present life. Yea, we read of nothing more frequent, than the saints praying either for the removal of some temporal evil or punishment, or the receiving of some temporal blessing or favour. If I should quote the Scriptures, I might transcribe a great part of the Bible. Nay, so far were they from looking upon it as below them, that we find Jacob putting it into his Indentures, when he bound himself to God; and made it, as it were the condition of his obligation to God's service: Gen. xxviii. 20, 21, then *Jacob vowed a vow saying, If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God.*

And, indeed, there is a great deal of reason and ground to pray for these things; for they are both needful for us, and God hath promised to give them to us.

1st. They are Needful for us, as the means, that God hath appointed for the preservation of our temporal life and being; in which we have so many opportunities to serve and glorify him, and so many advantages to secure heaven and glory to our souls.

And, therefore, as we tender either the obtaining of heaven, or the additional degrees of glory and happiness there: so we stand obliged to pray, that God would afford us those necessaries, that may conduce to the prolonging of our natural life; till, having finished our

work, we are made fit to receive our wages and reward. *Your Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things,* says our Saviour: Matt. vi. 32. And therefore, though miracles be a kind of *non obstante* to the law of nature, and a suspension of the ordinary course of providence; yet we often find God working a miracle to supply these wants of his people; whereas, it had been alike easy, by another miracle, to have caused them not to want; for it had been no more difficult, for God to have kept Elijah from hungering, than it was to make the ravens his purveyors, or to make a barrel of meal become a whole harvest, or to open a spring and fountain in the cruse of oil: but he chooseth rather to supply these wants than to cease them; to keep us in a continual dependence upon him, that the sense of our necessities might engage us to have continual recourse unto God for relief.

2dly. As temporal good things are needful for us, so God hath Promised to give them to us. Ps. l. 15; *Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee.* And, *my God,* says the Apostle, *shall supply all your need:* Phil. iv. 19. *The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them, that walk uprightly:* Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

Thus we see temporal good things may be prayed for, both because they are needful for us, and because God hath promised them to us. Yet,

[2] They must be prayed for only conditionally; for they are only conditionally promised.

And these conditions are twofold: if they become consistent with God's pleasure, and if they be conducible to our good: for, without the observing the one, we should not so much seem to petition as to invade; and, without observing the other, we should but beg a curse instead of a blessing.

[3] We may learn, likewise, that God is the giver of every temporal mercy and good thing.

Whatever thou enjoyest, it is from his mere free bounty. He spreads thy table, fills thy cup, makes thy bed, puts on thy garments, is the God of thy health and strength, and loadeth thee daily with his benefits. If thou hast riches, it is *the blessing of the Lord maketh rich:* Prov. x. 22. *It is God, that giveth thee power to get wealth:* Deut. viii. 18. Hast thou credit and reputation? It is God, that hideth thee *from the scourge of the tongue:* Job v. 21. Hast thou friends? It is God, that giveth thee favour in their sight. Hast thou gifts and parts? It is *the Almighty,* that *giveth* thee *understanding:* Job xxxii. 8. And hast thou joy and comfort in all

these? It is God, who not only filleth thy mouth with food, but thy heart with gladness.

Now God is said to give us our daily bread, and all the necessaries of life, especially two ways.

1st. By Producing them and Bringing them to us.

He is the great Lord and Proprietor both of Heaven and Earth. *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;* and he gives it to whom he will. He maketh it bring forth abundantly all its stores, for the use and service of man: for, be the chain of Second Causes never so long, yet the first link of them is held in his hand. And, therefore, we have it expressed, Hosea ii. 21, 22, *I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.*

2dly. God gives them, by Blessing them to us.

Without which blessing, our daily bread would no more nourish us than so much chaff: for, had we all the abundance that the earth could yield, and the blessing of God withheld from it, the very air would stifle us, and our very food would famish us: for it is not so much by these things that we live; not so much by our *daily bread*, as by *every word;* that is, by *every word* of blessing upon them, *which proceedeth out of the mouth of God:* Deut. viii. 3. And, concerning those to whom he denies this his blessing, he tells us, Job. xx. 22, *In the fulness of* their *sufficiency*, they *shall be in straits.* And, therefore, when we pray that God would give us our *daily bread*, we pray, not only that God would give us the possession and enjoyment of earthly comforts, but that he would put virtue and efficacy into them, by his blessing upon them, to be subservient to our relief and support, without which the staff of bread would break under us and the stay of water roll away from us. And, thus much, for the first thing, *Give us bread.*

(2) Let us consider, the specification of this blessing, or the Kind and Quality of it, our DAILY *bread.*

This word ἄρτον, is variously rendered. I shall not trouble you with the particular notions of it: let it suffice, that here by the word *bread*, is meant our ordinary and usual bread, or whatsoever is necessary for our subsistence in the world from day to day. And it is the same with what is expressed in that excellent prayer of Agur: Prov. xxx. 8, *Give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me.* So do we pray here, that he would bestow upon us daily, that which is sufficient for the day.

And by this we are taught to moderate our desires, and to beg of God no more than is needful for us. We beg not delicacies: we beg *daily bread;* not superfluities, nor goods laid up for many years.

But now, because the measures of necessities are divers, and that may be but *daily bread* to one, which to another is superfluity, it will be requisite to show you by what necessities our prayers are to be bounded. I answer,

[1] We may pray for the supply of all our natural necessities. And to this the sovereign principle of self-preservation strongly obligeth us: and he, that prays not nor endeavours for this, is a self-murderer; in withholding from himself, what is simply and absolutely necessary for the maintenance of his life.

[2] Besides things that are naturally necessary, there are things that are civilly necessary; which are not so absolutely imperious as the other: yet these also oblige us to pray for supplies and relief.

I account those things civilly necessary, which, though they are not simply necessary to the perservation of our life, yet are necessary to the state and condition in which Divine Providence hath set us. As, for men of high birth, of public note, or public employment: more is necessary for them, than for others, whom God hath placed to take up a narrower room in the world: for cedars require more sap than shrubs. And, for such as these to pray against poverty, is possibly to pray for much more than would make private persons rich. We are allowed to pray for such a competent measure of earthly blessings, as is suitable to our station, and commensurate to our charge and burthens; and, accordingly to the judgment of Christian prudence, apparently needful, for those whom we are bound to provide for, that they may live honestly and decently. All these are necessaries, that we are to pray for in this petition, *Give us our daily bread.*

But we must take heed, that neither covetousness nor ambition impose upon us; and make us measure necessaries, by our inordinate desires, rather than by our real wants: for whatsoever is more than enough for our present state and comfortable subsistence, is not our *daily bread,* but the bread of the poor, out of whose mouths we snatch it: and whatsoever we lay up, with great designs of enlarging ourselves or our posterity beyond our lawful measure, are but treasures of wickedness, whose rust will witness against us at the Last Day. And thus much for the second observable.

(3) In the words of this petition, are designed our Right and Propriety to this daily bread: *Give us* OUR *daily bread.*

[1] Now right to a temporal enjoyment is threefold, either natural, or spiritual, or civil. Natural, by creation: spiritual, by regeneration: and civil, by human and legal constitution.

1st. As for the Natural Right by creation, that was once found in Adam, who was made the visible Lord of the universe, and all things put under his feet.

We may read his patent and charter, Gen. i. 28, *And God said unto* him, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it*; *and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

But this right we have lost, and can call nothing ours upon this account. Only, as princes allow traitors and malefactors provision in their prison, till they come to execution: so God allows many wicked men many earthly enjoyments, out of the mere bounty of prison-provision, to keep them alive, till they are brought forth to their execution. This natural right therefore being lost, there succeeds in the room of it,

2dly. A Spiritual Right to earthly comforts.

And this belongs unto all those, who themselves do belong to Christ: for he is made the *heir of all things:* and all things, both in heaven and earth, are consigned over unto him by a deed of gift from God his Father; and they, being united unto Christ, and his spiritual offspring, are heirs with Christ and co-heirs of all that ample dominion which Christ himself possesseth. And, upon this ground, the Apostle tells the Corinthians, in 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23; *All things are yours . the world; things present,* and *things to come; all are yours:* and he subjoins this reason for it, for *ye are Christ's.*

But yet this spiritual right is not to be extended to an usurpation upon the temporal enjoyments of others: for grace and holiness, being a thing wholly inward and invisible, cannot confer any outward title. For this,

3dly. Is given by another right, which is Civil according to the constitution of human laws, and the process in courts of human judicature.

For law is the only distributer of *meum* and *tuum.* And we can call nothing ours, which is not so, or ought not to be so, by the sentence of the law under which we live; and he, that detaineth any thing which the sentence of the law adjudgeth to another, is guilty of theft and robbery.

[2] Now when *we* pray for our *daily bread,* we pray.

1st. That God would give us the good things of this life, to be obtained by us in a lawful regular manner.

2dly. That he would bless and increase those good things, that are rightfully our own.

3dly. That he would bestow upon us a spiritual right in whatsoever we enjoy, through Jesus Christ, who is the heir and possessor of all things. And,

4thly. We pray, that we may not desire nor covet that, which is another's: for we are taught to pray only for that, which we may

justly call ours; to which we have, as well a civil, as a spiritual right and title. And thus much for the third particular.

(4) We have in the words the Limitation of the petition, in respect, of Time. *Give us* THIS DAY *our daily bread.*

And, indeed, there is a great reason why we should pray for it *this day;* for we every day stand in need of relief and supplies from God. Our wants and our troubles grow up thick about us; and, unless God make daily provisions for us, we shall be overrun by them. Food nourishes but a day; and that, which we receive this day will not suffice us to morrow. There is a continual spring and fountain of necessities within us; and, therefore, we must have continual recourse unto God by prayer, that he would *daily* satisfy and supply our wants, as they *daily* rise up about us.

Again, by teaching us to pray for our temporal comforts *this day,* our Saviour tacitly intimates to us, that we should be content with our *daily* allowance. It is enough, if we have our *dimensum,* our appointed food for the day. To-morrow is in God's hand, and the care of it is his and not ours; and therefore he bids us, *take no thought for to-morrow:* that is, with no tormenting, carking and despondings thoughts: Matt. vi. 34. And, indeed, if we are provided for this day, we may well rest content and satisfied in the Providence of God; since he hath engaged his word of promise, that *he will never leave us nor forsake us.*

Now, in this part of the petition, there are sundry things we pray for. As,

[1] We pray for life itself; that it may be prolonged whilst God hath any service for us to do in the world. To this very end we pray for *daily bread,* that life may be maintained and preserved by it.

[2] Health and strength of body, which is indeed the greatest of temporal blessings, and the salt to all the rest, without which they are unsavoury and tasteless.

[3] All the means, that God's Providence hath appointed to preserve life and health, and to recover health when it is decayed and impaired.

[4] Success in our lawful calling, and endeavours for the procuring any conveniences and comforts of life. For, in this prayer, we beg a blessing upon our calling and industry, that God would prosper us in them, and by them increase our temporal enjoyments, so far forth as is needful to his own glory and our good.

[5] We beg a blessing from heaven upon whatsoever we enjoy, that it may indeed prove good and comfortable to us; without which all that we possess may prove a great heap of things, but none of them will be comforts or enjoyments.

And thus I have finished the First of those Petitions, that immediately concern ourselves, wherein we beg of God the supply of all our Temporal Wants.

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v. The Two, which remain, respect Spiritual Blessings: of which the former, which is the FIFTH petition in order of this most excellent Prayer, is for the Pardon of Sin: *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* Of which I now come to treat.

1. And here before we come to the petition itself, let us briefly take notice of *the connection and dependence, that it hath upon what went before.* Having prayed for *our daily bread,* we are next taught to pray for pardon.

And this method is, indeed, most wise and most rational. For,

(1) The guilt of sin many times withholds from us those earthly comforts we stand in need of.

We have forfeited all into the hands of God's justice; and he is pleased to make us know our obnoxiousness to his power and wrath, by denying or taking from us those temporal good things, as a due though the least punishment of our deserts: Is. lix. 2, *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear* you. And, therefore, when we have prayed for *our daily bread,* we are to pray likewise for the Pardon of our Sins: that the partition between God and us may be removed; and his blessing, being no longer obstructed by our guilt, may descend freely and plentifully upon us.

(2) Without pardon of sin, all our temporal enjoyments are but snares and curses unto us.

Though God doth sometimes bestow abundance of this world's good things upon impenitent and unpardoned sinners, yet they have not so many enjoyments as curses. Their bread is kneaded up with a curse, and their wine tempered and mingled with a curse: there is poison in their meat, and death in their physic: their table is their snare, their estate their fetters; and whatsoever should have been for their welfare, proves only a gin and a trap unto them: for the wrath of God is one direful ingredient among all that they possess. And, therefore, if we would have *our daily bread* given us, or comfort and blessing with it, we ought earnestly to beg the pardon of our sins; which are like the worm in Jonah's gourd, which will wither and devour all our enjoyments. And, thus much, for the Method and Order.

2. In the *words* themselves we have, The petition, *Forgive us our debts.* The condition or proportion, or plea and argument, call it

which you will for the obtaining of this forgiveness: *as we forgive our debtors.* In the Petition we may observe,

(1) That the same, which our Evangelist calls *debts*, is by St. Luke xi. 4, called *sins: forgive us our sins.*

We stand indebted to God, both as we are his creatures, and as we are offenders. By the one, we owe him the Debt of Obedience; and, by the other, the Debt of Punishment.

1st. As we are creatures, we owe the Debt of Obedience.

And to the payment of this debt we stand bound, both to the absolute sovereignty of God, who is the Supreme Lord of all his creatures, and therefore may oblige them to what he pleaseth; and, likewise, by his manifold favours and mercies conferred upon us. From him we have received our beings and all our comforts: he maintains us at his own cost and charge: he enlargeth us when we are in straits, relieves us when we are in wants, counsels us when we are in doubts, comforts us when we are in sorrows, delivers us in our dangers; and, besides the manifold temporal mercies we daily receive from him, gives us the means, the hopes, and promises of obtaining far better things at his hands, even eternal life and glory: and, therefore, certainly, upon these accounts we owe him all possible service and obedience. And, indeed, it is but reason we should employ all for him, from whom we receive all: and give up ourselves to his service, who are what we are by his bounty; and hope to be infinitely better, than now we are, through his mercy.

Now this Debt of Obedience is irremissible; and we are eternally and indispensably bound unto it: for it is altogether inconsistent with the notion and being of a creature, to be discharged from its obligation to the laws and commands of its Creator; for this would exempt it from the dominion of God, and make it absolute and independent; that is, it would make the creature to be no longer a creature but a deity. We do not therefore pray, that God would forgive us this debt: no; he cannot so far deny himself, and it is our happiness and glory to pay it. To this his sovereignty obligeth our subject condition; and his mercy and goodness, our ingenuity.

2dly. As we are transgressors, so we owe God a Debt of Punishment; to be suffered by us, to make God some reparation to his honour and satisfaction to his justice, for our transgressing his law, which sentenceth all offenders to eternal death and damnation.

This debt, now, is that, which we pray God would forgive us: a debt, which, if we pay, we are eternally ruined and undone: and there is no way possible to escape the payment of it, but by the free grace and mercy of God remitting of it unto us. And thus sin is

called a *debt:* not indeed properly, as if we owed it; but by a metonymy, as it is the meritorious cause of this punishment, the suffering of which we owe to divine justice.

Hence, by the way, we may observe that every sin makes us liable to eternal death: for death and damnation is the debt, which we must pay to the justice of God; and sin is that which exposeth us unto it, by the sentence of the Law which we have transgressed. For as, against other debtors, is brought forth some bond of obligation to exact payment from them; so, against us, is produced the hand-writing of the Law: and we, not having performed the condition of the bond, stand liable to the forfeiture and penalty; which is no less than curses, and woes, and torments, and everlasting death. *Cursed in every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law, to do them:* Gal. iii. 10. And, *the wages of sin is death:* Rom. vi. 23. And, *the soul that sinneth, it shall die:* Ezek. xviii. 4.

[2] Now here to excite thee to a fervency in praying for the forgiveness of thy debts, consider,

1st. The infinite multitudes of thy debts.

God's book is full of them; and there they stand on account against us, under every one of our names. We were born debtors to God. Our original sin and guilt obligeth us to punishment; and, although we did not personally contract the debt; yet, as being the wretched heirs and executors of fallen Adam, the debt is legally devolved upon us and become ours. And, ever since we came into the world, we have run upon the score with God: our debts are more than our moments have been: for whatsoever we have thought or done hath been sin; either in the matter, or at least in the circumstances of it.

God sets all our sins down in order in his debt-book: some, as Talents; and some, as Pence.

Our flagitious crimes and heinous impieties; our presumptuous sins, committed against light, knowledge, conscience, convictions, mercies, and judgments; each of these God sets down as a Talent: and how many thousands of these may we have been guilty of!

Our sins of ignorance, surreption, and daily infirmity are much more innumerable: and though they may be but as Pence, in comparison with the other; yet the unaccountable number of them will make the debt desperate, and the payment impossible.

And yet, notwithstanding our debts are so many, and very many of them such great sums too; yet we daily run ourselves farther in arrears; not considering that a day of accounts will come, when

both our talents and our pence shall be punctually reckoned up against us, not omitting the least item; when every vain thought and foolish passion that hath flushed up in us, with every idle and superfluous word that we have unadvisedly spoken, as well as the more gross and scandalous passages of our sinful lives, shall be then audited: all which will make the total sum infinite, and us desperate.

2dly. That God, who is thy creditor, is strict and impartial.

His patience hath trusted and forborne thee long; but his justice will, at last, demand the debt severely; and every particular shall be charged upon thee, even to the utmost farthing: for he hath booked down all in his remembrance, and will bring all to thine: and, therefore, we have it expressed concerning the Last Judgment, that *the books were opened: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works:* Rev. xx. 12. What now are these books, but the two great volumes of God's Remembrance, and our own Consciences? These are two tallies evenly struck, that shall justly represent the same sum and debt: and God's strict justice will not then abate thee anything of its utmost due; for he will by no means acquit the guilty. Indeed, we are apt to think, that, because God so long forbears us, he will never call us to make up and adjust accounts with him: our present impunity tempts us to question his omniscience, and to suspect his threatenings: and, because he winks at us, we are ready to conclude that he is blind: we are of that wretched temper, described, Ps. l. 21. Because God keeps silence, we think he is altogether such a one as ourselves; as careless in requiring his debts, as we are in contracting them: but he *will reprove* us, and *set them in order before* our *faces,* to our everlasting shame and confusion.

3dly. That the least of all these thy debts make thee liable to be cast into the prison of hell, and to be adjudged to eternal death and punishments.

Not only thy impudent and scandalous sins, which make thee detested of men as well as hated of God; but the least shadow of a thought that gives but an umbrage of vanity to thy mind, the least motion and heaving of thy heart towards a sinful object, the exhaling but of one sinful desire, the wavering of thy fancy, a glance of thine eye, is a debt contracted with the Infinite Justice of God; and a debt, that, without forgiveness, must be paid in the infernal prison of hell. So says our Saviour, Matt. v. 26, *Verily thou shalt not come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

Beware therefore, then, that you do not entertain any slight thoughts of sin: nor think, with the Papists, that there are some

sorts of sins, that do not deserve death ; which they call Venial Sins, in opposition to other more gross and heinous sins, which they allow to be Mortal. Believe it the least prick at the heart is deadly; and so is the least sin to the soul. And, indeed, it is a contradiction to call any sin venial in their sense who hold it is not worthy of damnation, for *the wages of sin is death ;* if it be not, how is it venial ?

There is but one mortal sin simply and absolutely, such as God hath revealed in his word that it *shall never be pardoned, neither in this world nor in that which is to come* and that is the Sin against the Holy Ghost ; which St. John therefore calls *a sin unto death.* 1 John v. 16. And so far are they, who are guilty of it, excluded from God's mercy, that they are excluded from the charity of our prayers : for we are not so much as to pray for such ; as it is there expressed.

Again, all the sins of finally impenitent and unbelieving wretches are eventually mortal, and shall certainly be punished at last with eternal death and damnation : for *the wrath of God abideth on him, that believeth not:* John iii. 36. And God *will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil:* Rom. ii. 6, 8, 9.

All sins whatsoever are mortal, meritoriously : both in the penitent and in the impenitent. The Law hath condemned all alike. Though all sins are not alike heinous, nor shall be equally punished ; but with some it shall be far more intolerable than with others : yet all are alike mortal, and deserve death and the same hell : though not the same place, nor the same degree of torments in hell ; for those sins, which are acounted most trivial and venial, are in themselves violations of the holy Law of God, and the penalty that his laws threaten is no less than death.

The Law is accurate, and reacheth to the least things ; yea, to the least circumstances of those things : and every transgression against it shall receive its due recompense of reward. Nay, had we no other guilt left upon our souls, from the first moment of our lives to this present day, but only the guilt of the least sin that the holy Law condemns ; be it only the wrenching aside a thought or desire, only a bye and sinister end in the performance of holy duties, nay let it be but the first rudiment and imperfect draught of a thought not yet finished, without a full satisfaction and expiation, this small debt would cast us into prison ; this little sin would sink us irrecoverably into hell, and lay us under the revenges of the Almighty God for ever

Oh, then, with what horror and amazement may sinners reflect upon their past sins! With what dread and trembling, may they ex-

pect their future state: since as many thousand sins as they have committed of all sizes and aggravations, so many deaths and hells heaped up one upon another have they deserved; and, without intervention of a full payment and satisfaction, must they be adjudged to undergo! For, though the least degree of divine wrath be a tormenting hell: yet God will inflame his wrath to as many degrees of acrimony and sharpness, as they have committed sins; till their punishment be equal to their offences, and become infinitely intolerable.

4thly. Consider, thou canst never pay God, nor discharge the least of thy debts for ever. For,

(1st.) Thou canst not possibly do it, by any Duties or Services in this life.

For, whatsoever thou dost is either required or not required. If it be not required, it will be so far from being a satisfaction for thy sins, that it will be an addition to them; and a piece of will-worship, which will meet with that sad greeting at the Last Day, *Who hath required* these things *at your hands?* If it be required, it is no more than thou owest to God before; and, if thou hadst never sinned, wert obliged to pay it: to think to satisfy for thy sins by thy duties, is but to rob one attribute of God to pay another; for, whatsoever obedience thou canst perform, thou owest it to the sovereignty and holiness of God, and his justice will never accept of that which belongs to his authority: besides, it is absurd to think to pay one duty, by another; to discharge the debt of sin, by paying the debt of duty.

(2dly.) Thou canst not pay off thy debts, by any Sufferings hereafter.

It is true, sinners shall lie eternally in prison, and be eternally satisfying the offended justice of God: but, in all that eternity, there shall never be that moment, wherein they may say, as Christ did in his making satisfaction, "*It is finished:* the debt is paid; and justice hath received as much as was due from me." No: that satisfaction must be eternally making: and therefore the punishment must be eternally lasting. For every sin, even the least sin, is committed against an Infinite God; and therefore the punishment of it must be infinite: for offences take their measures, as well from the dignity of the person against whom they are committed, as from the heinousness of the fact in itself considered: as a reviling word against the king is treasonable; against our equals, but actionable: and, therefore, by the same proportion, the same offence against the Infinite Majesty of the Great God, must needs carry infinite guilt in it; that is, exposeth to infinite punishment.

Now then, O Sinner, think with thyself, what satisfaction thou canst make to God, that can bear a proportion to thy infinite offen-

ces. Thou canst not at once, undergo an infinite measure of punishment; for thy nature is but finite. Couldst thou do this, then indeed there were hope, yea certainty of relief for thee; for divine justice will not exact more than its due: but because this is impossible, thy woes and torments in hell must be eternal, that they may be some way infinite as the justice is which thou hast offended; infinite, if not in degrees, yet in duration and continuance.

And, oh, what dreadful despair will this cause in thee, when thou shalt have been in hell under most acute and insufferable torments millions of years; and yet the payment of all that sum of plagues and woes shall not be of value enough to satisfy for the least of thy sins, nor to cross out of God's book the least and smallest of thy debts: but thy account shall still be as great and as full as it was at thy first plunging into hell, and still an eternity of torments remains to be paid by thee!

And now, wretched creatures that we are, whither shall we turn ourselves? What hope, what relief can we find? Shall we flatter ourselves that God will not require our sins at our hands? no: they are debts, and therefore he may; and he is a just God, just to himself and to the interest of his own glory, and therefore he will. God hath beforehand told us, at what rate we must expect to take up our sins, and what we must pay for them at the last. He hath told us as plainly as the mouth of truth can utter it, that *the wages of sin is death;* and the ways sinners choose, lead down to the chambers of hell and destruction. Our own misery is our own choice. He hath, in his word, set life and death before us; and declared to us the means, how we might escape the one and obtain the other. He hath represented to us the unconceivableness of both: and, if we will be so obstinate, as, after these manifest representations, to choose hell and death, it is but reason and justice that we should have our own choice; for it is our choice interpretatively, when we choose those ways and actions that expose to them.

And thus much concerning the acknowledgment we make in this petition, *our debts:* debts, vast and infinite, which the justice of God will strictly require of sinners in their eternal condemnation: debts, the least of which makes us liable to be cast into prison, into hell; and, for the least of which, we can never satisfy.

But, what! is there no hope? Is there no possibility to cross the book; to cancel the obligation, whereby we stand bound to the revenging justice of God, and everlasting sufferings?

Truly none, by our own personal satisfaction: but, yet, there is abundant hope, yea full assurance of it, through the free mercy of our

God. And, therefore, as our Saviour hath taught us to acknowledge our debts; so he hath likewise taught us to pray, *Father forgive us our debts.*

[3] And, now that I have showed you our misery by reason of our debts; and you have seen the black side of the cloud, which interposeth between God and us: so give me leave to represent to you our hopes and consolation, in God's free grace and the divine mercy, in dissolving this black cloud, that it may never more appear. And here let us,

1st. Consider what the Pardon of Sin is.

And this we cannot better discover, than by looking into the nature of sin. *Sin*, therefore, as St. John describes it, 1 John iii. 4, *is* a *transgression of the Law* of God. And to the validity of all laws, it is necessary that there be a penalty annexed; either literally expressed, or tacitly implied. The guilt, that we contract, by transgressing the law, is nothing else, but our liableness to undergo this penalty. And this guilt is twofold.

The intrinsical and formal: and that is the desert of punishment, which sin always necessarily carries in it, as it is a violation of a holy and righteous commandment.

The other is extrinsical and adventitious; and consists in the appointment and designation of the sinner unto punishment. This now doth not formally flow from sin; but from the will of God, constituting and willing to punish sin with death. Now pardon is nothing else, but the removal of the guilt of sin.

But now the question is, which guilt it removeth. I answer,

It doth not remove the intrinsical guilt of sin, or the desert of punishment. For the sins of those, who are justified and pardoned, do yet, in their own nature, deserve death and eternal damnation. As a pardon, vouchsafed to a traitor, doth not cause his actions not to have been treasonable and worthy of death: for this doth necessarily follow immediately upon the transgressing of the law, to which the penalty is annexed. So neither is it in the power of pardoning grace, to make that our sins should not deserve death, according to their own demerit: for that were a contradiction; since this demerit is necessary and essential unto sin as such.

Therefore, pardon of sin removes that guilt, which consists in the adventitious appointment or ordination of the sinner unto punishment, flowing from the will of God, who hath, in his Law, threatened to inflict eternal death as the reward and wages of sin.

Now this designation of the sinner unto punishment is twofold; either Personal or Mystical. One of these two ways God will certainly punish every soul that sins.

Either by appointing the sinner Personally to undergo the punishment of his iniquities: and thus he deals with unbelievers, whom he will punish, in their own persons, for their transgressions.

Or else he appoints them to undergo the punishment of their sins Mystically: as being by faith made one with the Lord Jesus Christ, *who himself hath borne our sins in his own body on the tree.*

Now pardon of sin doth not remove the mystical appointment of a believer unto punishment; for he hath suffered it: for Christ hath suffered it; and Christ and he are one mystical person by faith. God never pardons, but he likewise punishes the very sin that he pardons: he punisheth it in our surety and undertaker, when he forgives it to a believer.

Pardon of sin, therefore, removes only that guilt, which consists in our own personal appointment and designation to punishment: though the sin doth always in itself necessarily deserve death, though that death hath been inflicted upon Christ, and therefore upon believers in him, as members of him.

But yet, notwithstanding that God thus takes vengeance on our sins, he doth graciously pardon them, when he releaseth our personal obligation unto punishment; and reckons that we have suffered the penalty, in Christ suffering it, and therefore ought to be discharged from any farther liableness unto it.

This now is that pardon of sin, which we pray for, when we say, *Forgive us our debts.* And for the more full explication of it, I shall lay down these following positions.

(1st.) The pardoning grace of God, in respect of us, is altogether free and undeserved.

We can of ourselves scarce so much as ask forgiveness; but even this comes from the grace of God: therefore, much less can we do any thing to merit it. Far it be from us to affirm, as the Papists do, that good works proceeding from grace are meritorious of pardon and salvation. Alas! what are our prayers, our sighs, our tears, yea our very blood, should we spend it for Christ? They are but poor, imperfect things; and are so far from having in them any infinite worth and value to counterbalance our sins, that the defects of them add to the number of our other transgressions. They cannot all of them make one blot in the book of God's remembrance: but may well make more items there against us. Had it been possible for men to have quitted scores with divine justice by what they could do or suffer, heaven would not have been so needlessly lavish, as to send Christ into the world, to lead an afflicted life and to die an accursed death, only for our redemption and salvation.

(2dly.) The pardoning grace of God is not free, in respect of Christ; but it cost him the price of blood.

It is the blood of *the lamb, slain from the foundation of the world*, that crosseth the debt-book. *Without shedding of blood*, there is *no remission*, says the Apostle: Heb. ix. 22. And, *this is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins:* Matt. xxvi. 28. And although, possibly, God might, according to his absolute sovereignty, have freely remitted all the sins of all the world, without any kind of satisfaction, only by a free and gracious act of mercy: yet, considering that he had otherwise declared in his unalterable word of truth, that there must be a recompense made him for all our offences, it had been a wrong to his veracity, if not to his justice, to have granted the pardon of any one sin without the intervention of a full price and satisfaction. No satisfaction could be made correspondent to the wrong done to an Infinite God, but by an Infinite Person who was God himself: for, had the person been finite, the sufferings must have been eternal; otherwise, they could not have been proportionable to the offence, which requires an infinite satisfaction. But, if the sufferings had been eternal, satisfaction could never have been made, but would for ever have been making unto the justice of God; and, consequently, our sins could never have been pardoned. And therefore God appointed to this work of reconciling himself to fallen man, his Only Begotton Son, God co-equal and co-eternal with himself, and every way infinite as himself: that he might be able to bear the whole wrath of God, at once, and, at one bitter draught, drink off the whole cup of fury, which we should have been draining by little drops to all eternity. So that, justice being satisfied in the sufferings of Christ, for the sins of those, whose persons and whose guilt he sustained upon the cross; mercy hath now a way opened to glorify its riches, in their pardon and salvation.

Thus, in these two positions, it appears, that, though the remitting of our sins be an act of God's free grace and mercy, in respect of us; yet it is the effect of purchase, in respect of Christ. God pardons sins to them who committed them, upon their faith and repentance: but he pardons not those very sins to Christ, to whom they were imputed; but exacted satisfaction from him, to the very utmost rigour of justice. Hence it follows,

(3dly.) That the pardon of sin is not only an act of mere free grace and mercy; but, according to the terms of the Covenant of Grace, it is also an act of justice in God.

Indeed both mercy and justice are concurrent in it: for since by the union of faith we are made one mystical body with Christ, it

could not consist with the equity of God to punish the sins of believers in their own persons; for this would be no other than to punish them twice for the same offence, once in their surety, and again in themselves.

Now what abundant cause of comfort may this be to all true believers, that God's justice as well as his mercy shall acquit them! that that attribute of God, at the apprehension of which they were wont to tremble, should interpose on their behalf, and plead for them! Yet, through the all-sufficient expiation and atonement that Christ hath made for our sins, this mystery is effected; and justice itself brought over, from being a formidable adversary, to be of our party and to plead for us. Therefore the Apostle tells us, 1 John i. 9, that God *is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.* And St. Paul, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7, *It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us; when the Lord Jesus* Christ *shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.*

(4thly.) When God pardons, he doth no longer account us sinners. Indeed, after pardon, we still retain sinful and corrupt natures; and there is that original pollution in us, that can never be totally dislodged in this life. But, yet, when God pardons, he looks not upon us as sinners, but as just. The malefactor, that is legally discharged, either by satisfying the law or by his prince's grace and favour towards him, is no more reputed a malefactor; but as just and righteous, as if he had never offended. So is it with us: we are both ways discharged of our guilt: both by satisfying the penalty of the Law in Christ our Surety; and by the free grace and mercy of God, who hath sealed to us a gracious act of pardon: and therefore we are just in the sight of God, as if we had never sinned.

(5thly) Pardon of sin is one great part of our Justification.

Justification consists of these two parts, Remission and Acceptance. We have them both joined together, Eph. i. 6, 7, *He hath made us accepted in the beloved: In whom we have redemption through his blood,* even *the forgiveness of sins.* Remission of sins takes away our liableness to death: acceptation of our persons gives us a title unto life. Now to be free from our obnoxiousness to death, and instated in a right to eternal life; these two constitute a perfect Justification. For, to be accepted of God in Christ, is no other than for God, through the righteousness and obedience of Christ imputed to us, to own and acknowledge us to have a right to heaven. And, therefore, we have mention of pardon and an inheritance together, in St. Paul's commission to his ministry: Acts xxvi. 18,

that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an *inheritance among them that are sanctified.*

It is not, therefore, O Soul, a bare negative righteousness, that God intends thee, in the pardon of thy sins. It is not merely to remove the curse and wrath thy sins have deserved; though that alone can never sufficiently be admired: but the same hand, that plucks thee out of hell by pardon, lifts thee up to heaven, by what he gives thee together with thy pardon, even a right and title to a blessed and glorious inheritance. Thy pardon, thou hast from the Passive Obedience of Christ in his sufferings: a right to heaven, thou hast through the Active Obedience of Christ in fulfilling all righteousness: and, through both, hast thou obtained a complete Justification; God looking upon thee as innocent through the satisfaction of his Son, and as worthy through his obedience, both which are made thine by faith.

Now this pardon of sin is, in Scripture, set forth by very sweet and full expressions. It is called, a blotting out of transgression: a metaphor taken from a creditor's crossing the debt-book, signifying thereby a discharge of the debt. And, lest we might possibly fear God will implead us for them without book, the prophet adds forgetting unto blotting out: Is. xliii. 25, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for* my name's *sake; and* I *will not remember thy sins.* It is called, a covering of our sins: Ps. xxxii. 1, *Blessed is* the man, *whose transgression is forgiven,* and *whose sin is covered.* Yea, we have a farther ground of comfort, for it is not only a covering of our sins, but it is a covering of God's face from them: Ps. li. 9, *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.* It is a casting of them behind God's back, as a thing that he will never more regard: Is. xxxviii. 17, *Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.* And, lest we should suspect he should turn again to behold them, it is called, a casting of them into the bottom of the sea: Mic. vii. 19, as we do with things we would have irrecoverably lost and gone. It is a scattering them *as a thick cloud*: Is. xliv. 22, when the vapours of it are so dissipated, that there shall not remain the least spot, to obstruct the shining of God's face and favour upon our souls. Yea, and so perfect an abolition shall be made of all our iniquities, that, though divine justice should enter into a strict search and scrutiny after them, they shall not be found against us: so the prophet Jeremiah tells us, Jer. l. 20, *In those days, shall the iniquity of Israel be sought for; and there shall be none: and the sins of Judah; and they shall not be found.* How hath God heaped up expressions of his grace and mercy one upon another! and studied words, as

it were, to assure us of the validity of our pardon; giving to us abounding consolations, as our sins have been abounding!

And thus much shall suffice to show the nature of pardoning grace and mercy, as expressed in these words, *Forgive us our debts.*

2dly. Let us consider unto Whom this petition for pardon is directed.

And that is, as all the rest are, to our Father: whose laws we have violated, whose justice we have offended, whose displeasure we have incurred, and to whose vengeance we have made ourselves liable and obnoxious, to him we sue for pardon and remission.

Hence we may collect this note: That it is the high prerogative of God alone to forgive sins.

God assumes this particularly to himself, and seems to triumph in the glory of this attribute. *I, even I, am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions.* And, therefore, when Christ cured the Paralytic, the Scribes and Pharisees stormed at him for a blasphemer, for saying, *be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. Thou blasphemest,* say they: for *who can forgive sins, but God only?* Mark ii. 7. And this charge of blasphemy, which they laid against Christ, had he not been the True God, had been unanswerable. And therefore our Saviour denies not their principle, which is most certain and infallible: but, to convince them that they themselves were blasphemers, in applying it to him, proves his deity, by a miracle; and demonstrates his authority to forgive sins, by his power in healing diseases.

But, you will say, "If it be the incommunicable prerogative of God only to forgive sins, how is it that we find this privilege and power ascribed unto men also: John xx. 23, *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted?* It seems, therefore, that the Apostles, and Ministers of Jesus Christ their successors, stand invested by Christ with a power to forgive sins."

I answer: Remission of sins is twofold, either authoritatively and judicially: or, secondly, ministerial and declarative.

The former belongs only to God: who, by the mere authority of his grace and mercy, doth freely and fully acquit us of our guilt; without requiring anything at our hands, by way of recompense or punishment. Now for any creature, either in heaven or earth, to assume this to himself, is a most insolent and blasphemous pride; which while the Pope of Rome doth, he hath given us the strongest argument that can be, to assert and prove him to be the Antichrist, and *that Son of Perdition;* for, among the many characters that are given of Antichrist, all of which do more than sufficiently belong unto him, this is one, that he *exalteth himself above all that is called God:* 2 Thess. ii. 4.

Not only above Titular Gods, as Kings and Magistrates are (for it is notoriously known what power he arrogates unto himself, in disposing crowns and transferring states, making princes themselves far more inferior to him, that their subjects are to them :) but also above the only living and true God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, in pretending to a judicial authority to forgive sins and offences committed against God. For it is clear and evident, whosoever can pardon the offences of one person against another must himself be superior to both, and have authority and jurisdiction over both; but chiefly over the person offended, to make him cease the prosecution of his right, and sit down by the wrong received: for if a prince should pardon the injury that one subject doth the other, he must command the person grieved not to molest or prosecute him that hath done the wrong, and so disable him from taking revenge. Now what a wretched and damnable insolence is it for any vile sinful man to pretend to such a power of forgiving sins committed against God; as if, by his authority, he could command God to surcease his suit, and to require no farther recompense, but to rest himself contented that it is the Pope's will and pleasure to have it so! What is this, but to exalt himself above all that is called God, not only on earth, but in heaven itself? a most horrid blasphemy! and so proper a character of Antichrist, that there needs no other to describe him by.

There is a Ministerial, declarative remission of sins: and this is either internal, in the Court of Conscience; or external, in the Court of the Church of Christ here upon earth. The former remission is the office or ministry of the Holy Ghost, sealing of us up unto *the day of redemption;* by his silent and most comfortable testimony, witnessing unto us that our sins are pardoned and our persons accepted. The external declaration of remission of sins, is an open publication to all humble penitent sinners of the absolution and pardon of their offences, according to the tenor of God's faithful promises. And, in this sense alone, the ministers of Jesus Christ have power to pardon and remit sins. *Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted;* that is, whose sins you declare that God hath remitted, they are remitted: not absolutely, but conditionally; in case men come up to the performance of those conditions, upon which God hath promised pardon and forgiveness, which are faith and repentance. And, therefore, in our public Prayers, where the whole congregation hath made an humble confession of their sins, the Minister, according to his office and power given him by Christ, declares to them, that God "pardons and absolves all them that

truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." Or if, on any other occasion, the Minister say, "I absolve thee from thy sins;" yet the meaning is the same: he absolves him officially, not judicially: he absolves, by declaring him absolved and pardoned upon his sincere faith and repentance: which if people did but better understand, they would not be so forward to carp at, lest they carp at the very Gospel itself. Nor doth this at all intrench upon God's prerogative: for the Minister, only as the officer and messenger of God, declares that it is he alone who pardons and absolves penitent sinners: a practice, as far from bordering upon the intolerable arrogance of Antichrist; as it is, on the other side, from yielding enough to the express authority of Christ to adjudge it vain and fruitless. As it is the prince that pardons, the herald only proclaims it: so here it is God only who pardons sinners; the Minister's part, is, in a solemn and official manner, to pronounce and proclaim this pardon, to all that shall accept it upon the terms on which it is offered by God. And this may suffice in answer to that objection.

But then again it may be objected: "How is it God alone who forgives sins, whereas we likewise are bound to forgive those that trespass against us?"

To this I answer: Every tresspass against man is also an offence against God: for, so merciful is our God unto us, that he hath taken his creatures under the protection of his law, and fenced us round with the authority of his commands; so that no injury can reach us, but it must commit a trespass upon the divine law, and break through those bounds that God hath set about every man's propriety and right to defend it against unjust invaders. But, yet, if any shall dare to violate this, we must forgive them so far forth as it is a wrong to us; as I shall show more largely hereafter: but we cannot pretend to forgive the wrong that they have done to God, in wronging us; but this must be left between him and their own souls, to his mercy and their repentance.

If, then, it be the prerogative of God alone to pardon sin, hence we may, for our abundant comfort, be informed,

(1st.) That our pardon is free and gratuitous.

For whatsoever God doth he doth it freely; for his own sake, without respect to any former deserts, or expectations of any future recompence. It is infinitely below the sovereignty of his grace, to admit of any other motive for his mercy, but his mercy: and therefore he hath told us, *I will be gracious, to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy, on whom I will show mercy:* Exod. xxxiii. 19

Since it is God that pardons, it is infinitely unworthy of his glory and majesty, to sell his pardons and indulgencies, and to make his mercy merchandize.

But yet this pardoning Grace of God, though it be free in respect of purchase, yet is it limited to conditions in respect of application; which conditions are faith and repentance. *Whosoever believeth in him shall* obtain *remission of sins:* Acts x. 43. *Repent,* says the Apostle, *that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come:* Acts iii. 19.

Think not therefore, O Soul, when thy conscience is oppressed with the guilt of sin, think not what expiation thou must make, what ransom thou must pay to God. Say not, "*Wherewith shall I come before the Lord,* or *bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?* as the prophet speaks: Micah vi. 6, 7. What shall I do, or what shall I offer, to make amends and recompence for my offences?" This is to be injurious to the free grace of God, which requires no satisfaction from thee: only thy present acceptance and future reformation. This is that, indeed, which God requires from thee: but, to think to purchase his favour and to buy his mercy, is infinitely to disparage it: and they only judge rightly of it, who judge it invaluable.

(2dly.) It is God, that pardons; therefore our pardon is full and complete.

Indeed those acts, that God works within us, are in this life imperfect. The illumination of our minds, the sanctification of our hearts, are God's works within us: and these are defective; not as they come from God, but as they are received in us. As we know but in part, so we are sanctified but in part.

But those acts of God, that he doth not work in us, but only terminate upon us, of which we are the objects, but not the subjects, they are all as perfect here as they shall be to all eternity. Thus God justifies, adopts, and pardons fully and completely: for these are acts of God residing in his own breast, where they meet with no opposition or alloy; nor do they increase by any small degrees as our sanctification doth, but are at once as perfect as ever they shall be.

I do not mean, though some have so thought and taught, that God doth at once pardon all the sins of a true believer; as well those which for the future he shall commit, as those which he hath already committed: which is an absurd and dangerous tenet; as if sin could

be pardoned before it were, or guilt removed before it be contracted But only whatsoever sins God pardons, he doth it not gradually. Nothing of guilt is left upon the soul, when God pardons it; though still there be something of filth left in it, when God sanctifies it.

And, therefore, as it is the great grief of God's children, that their inherent holiness is so imperfect, affronted by temptation, foiled by corruptions, oppressed and almost stifled to death by a body of sin that lies heavy upon it; yet this, on the other hand, may be their exceeding great comfort and rejoicing, that God's pardoning grace is not as his sanctifying grace is, nor granted to them by the same stint and measure. A sin, truly repented of, is not pardoned to us by halves; half the guilt remitted and half retained, (as the Papists fancy, to establish their purgatory:) no, O Sinner, there is not any guilt left for thee to sanctify for, not any reserve of punishment for thee to undergo; but all thy sins are so pardoned, that they are in God's account as if they had never been committed against him. And, therefore, be thy comforts never so strong and flowing, and thy sense of God's pardoning grace never so clear; yet know that thy pardon is still infinitely more perfect, than thy joy in it can be satisfactory: for assurance, and the sense of pardon, is a work of God's Spirit wrought in us, and is commonly mixed with some hesitation and misgiving doubts; but our pardon is an act of God in himself, where it meets with nothing contrary, and therefore with no abatement, but is as perfect and absolute as ever it shall be in heaven itself.

(3dly.) Is it God, that pardons? Then, for thy comfort, know, that he can as easily forgive great and many sins, as few and small.

For the greatness and multitudes of thy sins can make no odds in infinite grace and mercy: only repent and believe. God proclaims his name: Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin:* that is, all sorts and sizes of sins. The greatest sins repented of are no more without the extent of his mercy, than the least unrepented of are without the cognizance of his justice. And that there is any one, though but one, sin unpardonable, ariseth not so much from the atrociousness of the fact, as if it exceeded mercy; but only from the malignity of its nature, hardening the heart against God, and making it incapable of repentance: otherwise, could they who commit this sin repent, even they also should obtain pardon.

Say not, therefore, "Mine iniquity is greater than can be forgiven: I have out-sinned mercy; and there is no portion for me in God:

his fiery indignation will eternally devour me." This is to be injurious unto God; and to stint that grace and mercy, which he hath made infinite. And thou mayest, with as much truth and reason say, that thou art greater than God, as that thy sins are greater than his mercy.

Yet, here, before I leave this, let me caution you, that you do not abuse this comfortable doctrine of God's pardoning sin; and turn that into presumption, that was intended only to arm you against despair.

Indeed both presumption and despair tend, in a diverse manner, to encourage and harden men in sin.

The despairing sinner argues: "If I must not be saved, if my sins be so many and great that there is no pardon for them, to what purpose then should I live strictly? To what purpose should I cross and vex myself by an unprofitable severity? It is too great niceness to scruple farther sinning, when I am already sure of damnation; and, therefore, if I must go to hell, I will make my way thither as pleasant as I can." This is a kind of despair that produceth, not horror, as it doth in some; but a most wretched carelessness what becomes of them.

On the other hand, presumptuous men argue: God is able to pardon the greatest and vilest sinners: they cannot sin beyond the reach and extent of his grace and mercy; and, therefore, what need they yet trouble themselves to repent and reform? They will yet indulge themselves a little longer in their sins; for it is as easy for God to pardon them at the last moment of their lives, as upon many years' preparation.

We see iniquity every where most fearfully to abound in the world; and, doubtless, both despair and presumption have too great an influence, both upon the minds and lives of men, to make them careless in their eternal concernments.

Enough hath been spoken to the despairing, which are but few; but, to the presumptuous, let me add a word.

It is the most unworthy and disingenuous use they can make of the mercy of God, to press it to serve against its authority; *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid!* Shall we sin licentiously, because God pardons freely? No: the grace of God obligeth otherwise: the love of Christ constraineth otherwise: the filial disposition of the new creature inclineth otherwise: gratitude and retribution engage otherwise. But if these motives be too refined and ingenuous for thy sordid and slavish spirit; and if thou wilt still go on in the presumption of thy heart, crying Peace, Peace to thyself, although thou continuest adding one iniquity to another;

know, O vile wretch, that *the Lord will not spare* thee: *but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against* thee; *and all the curses that are written in* his *book shall* come upon thee, *and the Lord* will *blot out* thy *name from under heaven:* Deut. xxix. 20.

And thus I have done with the general consideration of God's pardoning sin, held forth to us in this petition: *Forgive us our debts,* or *trespasses.*

[4] Now, in this petition, we pray not only for the pardon of sin: but, likewise, for all things that are antecedently necessary to obtain it. As,

1st. We pray, that God would discover to us the horrid odious nature of sin: that he would convince us of the woeful, miserable estate, that we are in by nature; and how much more wretched and miserable we have made ourselves by our sinful lives: that he would set home the terrors of sin upon our consciences, to our humiliation; and make us despair in ourselves, that we might fly unto Christ, and lay hold on that help and refuge he hath set before us.

2dly. We pray, that God would humble us under the sight and sense of our manifold transgressions; that, as our sins have made us vile in God's eyes, so they may make us vile in our own, to loath ourselves in dust and ashes for them.

3dly. We pray, that God would give us his Spirit, to enable us to confess our sins cordially, and sincerely to pour forth our hearts before him, and to acknowledge our manifold provocations with shame and godly sorrow, upon which God promised to grant us pardon and forgiveness: Prov. xxviii. 13, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso, confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy.* And the Apostle tells us: *If we confess our sins,* God *is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness:* 1 John i. 9.

4thly. We beg a more clear understanding of the sacrifice and atonement made by Jesus Christ, through which alone all pardon is purchased and procured; to know both what it is and why ordained: and, likewise, the knowledge of God's rich and free mercy: and the conjunction of this sacrifice and mercy together, in the great mystery of the freeness of divine grace, and the satisfaction of Jesus concurring to the remission of our sins and the salvation of our souls.

5thly. We pray, that we may have a high esteem of Christ, and may hunger and thirst more after him and his righteousness, through whom alone pardon of our sins is to be obtained.

6thly. We pray, that we may be brought over to close with the Lord Jesus Christ by a lively faith: that his righteousness thereby

may be made ours; and we, by that righteousness, may obtain pardon of our sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified. For, though pardon be procured by the death of Christ, yet the application of it to the soul is only by faith, uniting us unto him, and making us one with him: for all, that Christ hath either done or suffered for the redemption of the world, would be altogether in vain as to our particular benefit and advantage, were it not that faith entitles us unto it; and makes that satisfaction, which he hath given to divine justice, to be mystically our act, as it was personally his.

And thus I have considered the Petition itself, *Forgive us our debts.*

(2) I now proceed to the condition or Plea annexed: *as we forgive our debtors.* And here we have, The act: *forgive.* The object: *debtors.* The limitation of this object: OUR *debtors.* The proportion or resemblance, in the particle *as:* AS *we forgive our debtors.*

[1] I shall begin with the object: *debtors.*

As all men stand indebted to God in a twofold debt; a Debt of Obedience, and a Debt of Punishment: so one man may be a debtor to another two ways; either by owing to him a Debt of Duty, or else a Debt of Satisfaction.

1st. Some men stand indebted to others in a Debt of Duty.

And, indeed, I might well have said, this debt is reciprocal between man and man. Thus children owe parents reverence and obedience; and parents their children, provision and education. Subjects owe their magistrates honour and tribute; and magistrates owe their subjects justice and protection. Servants owe their masters fear, diligence, and faithfulness; and masters owe their servants maintenance and encouragement. And, generally, all men owe one another, love, respect, and kindness.

Now these debts cannot balance one another: that as much as is left unpaid me by any person; so much again I may refuse to pay him. If a father pay not his debt to his child, or a magistrate to his subject, or a master to his servants, they are not hereby acquitted of their obligations; but, still, duty, obedience, and faithfulness is required from inferiors to their superiors. And so, on the contrary, love, protection, and maintenance are required from superiors to their inferiors, although peccant, as long as the relation shall continue between them. And the reason is, because we are bound to these duties, not only by the obligations that mutual offices lay upon us, but by God's express will and command, and the performance of the relation that is betwixt us. And, therefore, though it be lawful for two persons, that owe one another an equal debt of money, or other such like things, to cross out one debt by the other, and so

discount it between them; yet it is not so, where the duties that God requires are the debts they owe to each other: for, although others may fail in the performance of what belongs to their part, yet thou oughtest not to fail in thine; for, thus to be even with men is to run in debt with God, and to make him thy creditor who will certainly be thy revenger.

And from hence it appears, that this is not the debt, that we are to forgive our debtors, for we have no power to release them from their obligation to duty, whilst the relation between us continues, no more than we have to rescind the laws of God and of nature.

2dly. Some men may stand indebted to others in a Debt of Satisfaction; as they owe them reparation, on good grounds, for wrongs and injuries done against them: and this is the debt, which we are to forgive others. Now, as wrongs and injuries are of divers sorts, so many divers ways may others become debtors to us. And they are chiefly these Six that follow.

(1st.) By wronging us in our persons, either by unjust violence, or by unjust restraints. Thus the persecuting Jews were debtors to the apostles and disciples of Christ, for often scourging and imprisoning them.

(2dly.) By wronging us in our place and dignity; and in the office, to which, by God's Providence, we are called. And so also those, that vilify the persons, and detract from the authority of those that are set over them, become their debtors. Thus Aaron and Miriam were debtors unto Moses, for traducing the authority that God had committed unto him: Num. xii. 2.

(3dly.) By wronging us in our friends and relations, either by corrupting them:—thus Sechem became a debtor to Jacob and his sons, for violating his daughter and their sister: or else by destroying them:—so Herod, to the Bethlemitish mothers, by murdering their children.

(4thly.) By wronging us in our right and title; withholding from us what is our due.

(5thly.) In our possessions; when, either by force or fraud, they take from us what of right belongs to us.

(6thly.) In our reputation and good name; unjustly defaming us for those crimes, which only their malice hath invented and published against us.

To all these wrongs we are subject; God permitting the wickedness of men a large scope to vent itself, and affording us a large field to exercise our meekness and forgiving temper in each of these.

But, withal, if those, who, in any of these, or any other particulars

do wrong their brethren, are, by the sentence of our Saviour, here pronounced Debtors, this should teach them to look upon themselves as obliged to make satisfaction, according to the utmost of their power and ability.

Thou, therefore, who art conscious to thyself of wronging any, either in their persons, or dignities, or relations, or rights, or possessions, or reputations, though it be thy duty to confess it before God, and humble thyself to him for it, begging mercy and pardon at his hands: yet this is not enough; for, by one single offence, thou hast contracted a double debt. Thou standest indebted to the justice of God, for the violation of his law: but this is not all; but thou standest in debt unto man likewise, by injuries done against him. And both thy creditors must be satisfied: God, by the righteousness of Christ, through thy faith and repentance; and man, by an acknowledgment, reparation, and restitution. The Apostle hath commanded us: Rom. xiii. 8, to *owe no man anything, but to love one another.* And, indeed, satisfaction for wrongs is a necessary part of repentance: for he, that truly repents, doth really and from his heart wish that the wrong had never been done; and therefore will be sure to do his utmost to annihilate the fault, by giving the abused party a compensation fully answerable to the injury, and to the utmost of his ability restore him into the same or a better condition than that in which he was before he received the wrong. Therefore,

[2] Art thou conscious to thyself, that thou hast wronged any man in his credit and reputation, either by raising or divulging false and slanderous reports?

Know that thou art his Debtor; and justice obligeth thee to make him satisfaction for that injury, by wiping away those aspersions, and licking away the dirt with the same tongue with which thou didst bespatter him: for, if thou sufferest the same reports to run on which thou hast set on foot, all, that shall relate them after thee, multiply thy guilt; and all the numerous offspring of lies, which, through a certain itch that men have of speaking ill, will be soon propagated, shall all be charged upon thee; for, of them all, thou and the Devil art the Father.

[2dly.] Art thou conscious thou hast wronged thy superiors, as Magistrates, Ministers, Parents, or Masters, in that authority and power that God hath given them over thee, by any disobedient demeanour towards them?

Know, that thou art their Debtor; and it lies upon thy conscience to give them due satisfaction: which because it cannot be done by recalling the offences past, it must be done by an humble acknowl-

edgment to them; desiring their pardon, and promising and endeavouring more ready submission for the future. So was the case of Aaron and Miriam, when they had affronted Moses, and were convinced of the wrong they had done him: Aaron makes his humble acknowledgment and begs forgiveness: Num. xii. 11, *Alas my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.* And so the Prodigal, when he returned to his father, confessed his disobedience: Luke xv. 21, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son:* which, though it be a parable, yet teacheth us real and literal duties in parallel cases.

[3dly.] Art thou conscious to thyself, that thou hast wronged any one in their right; either in withholding or taking from them, what, in law and equity, belonged to them?

Thou art their Debtor; and, as such, art bound to make them satisfaction, by making them a full and plenary restitution: and that, though the thing, wherein thou hast wronged them, be great or small, more or less; yea, though it should seemingly tend to the loss of thy credit to acknowledge such a wrong, or visibly tend to thy impoverishing and undoing to restore it. Nor is it enough, when thy conscience checks thee for it, that thou confess the sin to God, and prayest for pardon at his hands: but it behooveth thee to render unto man what is his, and what thou unjustly keepest from him: whether it be his, by thy promise and engagement, or by his former title and possession. As thou lovest thy soul, and hopest for pardon and salvation, thou must make restitution. And the reason is, because, as long as thou detainest it, so long thou continuest in the commission of the same sin; for an unjust detainure and possession is a continued and prolonged theft. And, certainly, our repentance be it what it will, can never be true and sincere, while we continue in the sin we seem to repent of: and, this repentance not being true, pardon shall never be granted thee; but, as thou remainest a debtor to man, so the debt to God remains uncancelled; and, though men may not sue thee to recover their right, because this sin sometimes is so secretly carried on that it may not come to their knowledge, yet divine justice will sue thee for it, and pursue thee to eternal condemnation.

But, you may say, "What if those, whom we have wronged, be since dead: how can any restitution be made to them or any recompense reach them?"

I answer: In this case, thou art bound to find out their children or relations, in whom they still live; and to whom, it is to be sup-

posed, that, which thou hast detained, should have descended: and to restore it unto them; with ample satisfaction, likewise, for all the prejudice they have sustained, in the mean time for want of it. But, in case none can be found to whom of right it may belong, then God's right takes place, as he is the Universal Proprietor of all things: and thou oughtest, besides what thou art obliged to give of thine own, to bestow it in works of charity and piety, which may promote his glory; still bewailing, that thou hast so long deferred the restitution of it to the immediate owners, till thou hast made thyself now incapable of doing it.

This, perhaps, will seem a very hard lesson to many; and, doubtless, it is so to a world so full of rapine and injustice: but I cannot, I dare not make God's commands lighter nor easier, than he hath made them. And let this seem as hard as it will, yet this is the Rule of Christianity: this is the inflexible law of justice; and, without observing it, you keep yourselves from all hopes of obtaining pardon by continuing in your sin, which is utterly inconsistent with repentance, and without repentance there can be no remission nor salvation.

And thus much for the word *Debtors*, and what it intimates to us; namely, that we are bound to make satisfaction for all the wrongs and injuries we have done to any others.

[2] But, then, as there lies this debt on the part of the debtor, so doth there likewise one great and important duty on the part of the creditor: and that is, Forgiveness: *as we forgive our debtors*

Now all pardon and forgiveness, is a removing of the liableness unto punishment, under which we formerly lay: and, therefore, as when God pardons, he frees us from the punishment due to our offences; so, when we pardon and forgive others, it must be by a meek forbearing to punish others who have offended us.

And this consists in two things.

1st. In abstaining from the Outward Acts of private and personal revenge; whether by word, or by deed: for both are expressly forbidden us.

If others have bent their tongues against us, and *shot forth their arrows even cruel words*, Christianity obligeth us not to return them back again; much less, as is the common but wicked practice of the most, with double measure and advantage: for, if they have wronged us by their actions as well as by their speeches, we may not assume to ourselves a liberty of retribution; nor think that the iniquity of their proceeding will justify the equity of ours. For both of these, see what the Apostle saith: 1 Pet. iii. 8 9; *Be pitiful, be courteous:*

not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but, contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. And, indeed, there is nothing, that the Gospel and laws of Christ do more instantly press upon us, than that we would not requite injuries with injuries. This prohibition is the proper character of his doctrine, and this the practice of his disciples. Revenge is a wild, untamed passion, that knows no bounds nor measures. And, if we were permitted to carve it out for ourselves, we should certainly exceed all limits and moderation: for selflove, which is an immoderate affection, would be made the whole rule of our vengeance; and, because we love ourselves abundantly too well, we should revenge every imaginary wrong done us with too much bitterness and severity: and, therefore, God would not trust the righting of ourselves in our own hands, knowing we would be too partial to our own interest and concerns; but hath assumed it to himself, as the prerogative of his own crown: Rom. xii. 19, *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

But you will say, "How, then! must we sit down under every petulant wrong, that is done us; and, by a stupid patience, invite injuries, and tempt others to the sport and recreation of abusing us? for every one will be ready to shoot his arrows against a soft butt, where they will stick; but who will care to shoot them against a stone-wall, that will rebound them back in their faces again?"

I answer: It is, indeed, well worth the most serious and critical consideration, rightly to state how far we are bound to forgive injuries and wrongs, without requiring any satisfaction for them.

And, because the resolution of this seems to be of great difficulty, as also of great importance for the regulating of our consciences, I shall, first, lay down some Distinctions; and, then, some Conclusions drawn from them, for our more full satisfaction in this case.

First Distinction. Those wrongs, that are done thee, may either be forgiven by thee without doing any wrong to others, or not.

Second Distinction. Those wrongs, which thou mayest forgive without doing any wrong to any other, are either light and tolerable offences, or of great concern and consequence.

Now these distinctions being premised, I say,

First Conclusion. In no case whatever, be the injury greater or less, is private revenge to be allowed; but so far forth art thou bound to forgive it, as not to be both judge and executioner thyself. This, I suppose, is clear and indubitable, that all revenge is to be committed to the magistrate's sword; whom God hath armed with

authority and commission, to be the *avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

Second Conclusion. Therefore, if the wrong thou hast received be insupportable, and tends either to the ruin of thy estate and necessary subsistence, or to the irreparable loss of thy good name, or it may be of thy life; I know no precept of forgiveness, that doth in this case forbid thee to seek satisfaction; but it must be only in a public and legal way: otherwise, in forgiving others, we should vastly injure ourselves; and so pervert the rule, which commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves, and therefore ourselves primarily as the stand and measure of our love to them. Now if any one should attempt to take away that, which is necessary to my livelihood; or, by false accusations, should go about to take away my credit or my life; certainly, I owe so much charity to myself, as to resist him in it, and to require satisfaction and recompense for it: but, still, this must be observed, that we ought not to right ourselves according to our own private discretion, but by the sentence of the law and by the authority of the magistrate; for the *law is good*, says the Apostle, *if a man use it lawfully.*

And, therefore, briefly, in our seeking for our right at law, there are these three things requisite to make it a lawful and allowable action.

(1st.) When that we sue for, is a matter of moment.

(2dly.) When we have to do with obstinate and stubborn persons, who will yield to nothing but what they are forced and compelled to, and will not stand to the award and arbitration of private Christians.

(3dly.) When we have, beforehand, used all likely and probable means to prevail with those who have done us wrong, to make us necessary and fitting satisfaction.

These three things must always concur to make our suing, even for public revenge, a thing lawful. And, then, in all such processes, we must be sure to observe these two things.

[1st.] That we have right on our side, or at least be verily persuaded that we have it; and that the person, whom we prosecute, doth us wrong. To seek for reasonable satisfaction in this case, is so far from being charged with rancour and malice, that it is rather an effect of love to bring them to do us right, whereby indeed they do greater right to themselves.

[2dly.] We must be sure to maintain love to them; being willing and ready to do them any kind offices, whatsoever lies in our power. We must, therefore, seek our right with much meekness and compassion. And, when a controversy depends between us and any

other, we should not make it a matter of strife and variance; but only put it to the decision of the law, to whom the right belongs: and, if it be found to belong to the other and not to thyself, thou oughtest to be glad that right is done, and to prefer the interest of justice before thine own; otherwise, thou seekest victory, and not equity. And this is the Second Conclusion, that, for a great important wrong, thou mayest lawfully seek for satisfaction.

Third Conclusion. If the wrong done thee cannot be passed by without the wronging of others, thou mayest and oughtest in this case to require satisfaction. As, for instance: the laws of the land have ordained death, as the punishment of robberies and theft upon the highway in the day, and breaking open of houses in the night; not so much for revenge upon the guilty, as for example to others, and for security to the innocent. In this case, we ought not to pass by any who have been apprehended, thus unjustly invading our possessions; especially if we have just cause to suspect, as commonly it so happens, that our suffering them to escape will but embolden them to farther outrages: for this were a wrong done to the nation and community in which we live; and, by such an indiscreet pity and compassion, we bring upon ourselves the guilt of all the crimes that they afterwards commit.

Fourth Conclusion. If the wrongs that are done thee be tolerable, and thou mayest forgive them without wronging of others, the laws of Christianity oblige thee so to do, without standing upon any satisfaction and reparation for them. Our Saviour hath given us our rule in this case: Matt. 5. 40, *If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also:* which teacheth us, that, about small matters, things which we may easily be without or easily procure, such as a cloak or a coat, we should not be contentious; but rather recede from our right, than vigorously pursue it with strifes and quarrels. And we ought to be so far from seeking revenge for such petty injuries, as are not destructive nor greatly prejudicial to us, as to be willing rather to suffer a second, than to revenge the first: for if all, that can be called our due and our right, must be exacted to the very utmost, what debt is there that we are bound to forgive? Those, therefore, are justly to be condemned, that take every advantage against their neighbors; and although the offence be but trivial, a passionate word, or a sudden and light blow, that proceedeth not from any propense and intended malice, or the like, presently pursue such advantages with rigour and extremity; and, because they may do it according to the law of man, regard not the law of God, which commands us to forgive such debtors.

And this is the first thing, wherein forgiveness doth consist, in abstaining from the outward acts of revenge, and exacting satisfaction from those who have wronged us: where we have seen how it is limited, and how to be observed.

2dly. Forgiving our debtors consists in the Inward Frame and Temper of our Hearts towards them: that we bear them no malice, no ill-will; but be as much in charity with them, as though they never had offended us.

And this forgiveness we are bound always to exercise, even in those cases in which we may seek for satisfaction: yea, although we could never prosecute them for satisfaction, yet if we retain secret grudgings and animosities in our hearts against them, this is not an entire forgiveness, and such as will be acceptable to God; for he estimates the heart, and not only the outward actions, which may have many bye ends to sway and direct them.

And thus I have as briefly as I could, shown you what forgiving of our debtors is, and how far we are bound to do it.

[3] And now, Christians, I know you cannot but reflect seriously upon it, how hard and difficult a duty this of forgiveness is. It is that, which the whole interest of flesh and blood, and all the party that passions and affections can muster up within us, will certainly rebel against.

And, alas, how seldom is it, that men can conquer themselves so, as to yield obedience unto it really and cordially! Whence is it, that all places are so full of railing and reviling, quarrels and challenges, vexatious contentions and endless suits, warrants, arrests, actions, and imprisonments, and that upon slight injuries and provocations; but only, that they have not learned this necessary duty, of forgiving one another?

Nay, many think it the part of a high spirit and generous nature, to make themselves terrible to those, who, they suppose, have in the least wronged and affronted them; and, upon the least disgust, fly out into all extremities of threatenings and revenge: whereas, in truth, this is but the effect of a mean and sordid spirit. It is a disposition breathed into men's souls by the Devil; and demonstrates, as a great deal of pride, so a great deal of vileness and baseness.

The truest gallantry and generousness is, to imitate the great God, in being patient and longsuffering, and ready to pardon and forgive. This is that height of spirit, the true magnanimity and greatness: and, if we would be perfect, we must stoop: stoop, did I say? rather we must aspire to this heavenly temper. And to excite unto this, consider,

1st. That it is infinitely more honourable, to forgive a wrong than to revenge it. For,

(1st) The one makes thee like to God: the other makes thee like the Devil.

Yea, it is the chiefest excellency, by which God delights to be set forth; *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions:* Is. xliii. 25. And, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?* Micah vii. 18. Now, how glorious is it to imitate God, in that, which he himself counts his chiefest glory! The great ones of the earth imitate him, in power and authority; and are some kind of glimmering types of his majesty, who daunts and dazzles all approachers: but a poor contemptible Christian, whose meanness lays him open and exposed to all the wrongs and injuries of abusive and insulting wretches, may represent a far greater glory of God, than that wherein princes and monarchs shine; even his forbearance, pity, longsuffering, and pardon: he may represent God sitting upon his Throne of Grace; whereas the other represents him only sitting upon his Throne of Power. Now God never triumphs more in any attribute, than that of his mercy. See with what fair flourishes he writes his name: Exod. xxxiv. 6, *The Lord, the Lord God:* infinite in power; that spreads forth the heavens, and rangeth all the host of them; that hangs up the earth in the midst of the air, and the whole world in the midst of a vast and boundless nothing; that pours out the great deep, and measures it in the hollow of his hand; that rides upon the wings of the wind, and makes the clouds the dust of his feet! No: but, when he would display himself in his greatest glory, he doth it in a still voice: *The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.* Now, O christain, by forgiving those who have wronged thee, thou makest thyself as a God unto them; and imitatest him, in that, wherein he doth chiefly glory.

(2dly) It is more honourable, because to pardon is always the act of a superior: it is a prerogative of royalty; and highly becomes the majesty of those, whom Christ hath made Kings as well as Priests; and, certainly, they cannot better declare themselves such, than by issuing out pardons.

Think, therefore, with thyself, O Christian, when thou art wronged and affronted, think what an advantage the petulancies of froward men do give thee to make thyself their superior: it is but pardoning them, and thou ascendest the throne. And, certainly, they can never so much triumph over thee by their injuries, as thou mayest over them by forgiveness. And so much for the First Motive.

2dly. Consider how many offences God hath forgiven thee, and this will be an effectual motive to engage thee to forgive others.

And here consider who it is that hath forgiven thee, and what it is he hath forgiven thee.

(1st.) Consider who it is that hath forgiven thee.

And, here consider the infinite distance, that is between thee and him. He is the Sovereign Lord and Creator of all; in comparison with whom thou art nothing, yea, less than nothing. He stands in no need of thee, but whether thou live or die, perish or art saved, he is the same God, for ever blessed in himself. He is able to destroy thee every moment, able to breathe thee back into thy dust, to look thee into hell and destruction. *They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance:* Ps. lxxx. 16. And yet this high and absolute Lord at thy entreaty, freely forgives thee all thy debts: although he might have gotten himself a great renown in thy everlasting perdition, and might have set thee up as a flaming monument of his wrath, and inscribed on thee victory and triumph to the glory of his everlasting vengeance. And shouldst not thou then, O Man, O Worm, forgive thy fellow-servant; one, of the same mould and materials with thyself; one, to whom perhaps thou art no way superior, unless that he hath now given thee an opportunity of pardoning him; one, who possibly may hereafter be helpful unto thee, and in agreement and peace with whom thou mayest find much comfort and good to thyself; shouldst thou not much more forgive him? Certainly, God may very well think thee unworthy of his pardon, who art infinitely his inferior, if thou canst not think those worthy of thy pardon, who in nature are thy equals.

(2dly.) Consider, the wrongs and debts, that God hath forgiven thee, are infinitely greater than those thou art to forgive unto men. Their offences against thee are but pence; but thine against God are talents. And, as there is a vast disproportion in the nature of the offences, so is there likewise in the number of them: the servant in the parable, whom his lord forgave, owed him *ten thousand talents;* but his fellow-servant, whom this wretch would not forgive, owed him but *a hundred pence:* Matt. xviii. So is it with us: our sins against God, for the greatness of them are talents, for the number of them are ten thousand. In every thing we do we wrong the glory of God, and are continually offending him: but men do not always wrong us; or, if they did, yet the least of our offences against God is far more heinous, than the greatest of men's can be against us. We cannot speak of him, nor to him, but that by our unworthy and low conceptions we revile him far more, than any

man can do us by the most studied and bitter invectives. The least irreverend thought of God is a greater injury against him, than it would be against us if men should wound or stab us.

And yet, although thy deeds be as great as talents, and so numerous as many thousand talents, yet thy Lord and Master frankly forgave thee all. And this should, by all the obligations of ingenuity, constrain thee to forgive thy fellow-servant so small debts as a hundred pence, when he hath not wherewithal to make thee satisfaction. See how our Saviour presseth this in the fore-cited place: Matt. xviii. 32, *I forgave thee all that debt,* thou owedst me, *because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?* Certainly, if ever thou accountedst the pardoning grace and mercy of God sweet and precious, I will not say thou shouldst be glad of wrongs that thou mightest have occasion to pardon them: but yet certainly thou shouldst most cordially embrace all such occasions, if it were but only to recommend the excellency of thy charity unto others; as divine love hath recommended its fulness and riches to thy dearest esteem. And that is the Second Motive. But,

3dly. Consider the binding particle in the text: *Forgive us our debts,* AS *we forgive our debtors.*

And now think with thyself, that thou dost but bind and seal the guilt of thy sins upon thy own soul, unless thou art willing and ready to forgive others. Thou, who art revengeful and implacable, instead of praying, pronouncest the most direful and dreadful curse that can be against thyself; and beggest of God, no more to forgive thee, than thou dost forgive those that have offended thee: and so thy prayer is not only turned into sin, but into a snare and curse; and thou passest upon thyself the tremendous sentence of thine own eternal damnation: for, if thou prayest that God would forgive thee as thou forgivest others, thou either cursest thyself, or else thou must forgive them.

[4.] Now this forgiving of others must have these qualifications.

1st. It must be unfeigned and cordial from thy very heart and soul: for so thou wouldst have God forgive thee.

It is not enough to forbear outward revenge; but thou must not harbour in thy breast the least grudge or prejudice against them. God forgives so as to forget: but if thou keepest malice raked up in thy heart, till thou canst find a fit opportunity to vent it in revenges; how canst thou but expect that God likewise should take his advantage against thee; and, when it would make most for the glory of his justice, break forth upon thee and exercise his vengeance in thy everlasting destruction.

2dly. Thou art obliged likewise to forgive freely, without any recompense or satisfaction from others.

If the injury be supportable, we ought not so much as expect or desire satisfaction: if it be otherwise, and yet the persons offending unable to make satisfaction, we ought to forgive them without taking any unmerciful revenge upon them: which is the wicked custom of many, who will cast their insufficient debtors into prison, and there let them starve and rot; though by this cruelty they cannot satisfy their debt, but their malice and revenge.

3dly. We must forgive others fully and completely: for God doth so. He pardons our sins so fully, that they are in his account as if they had never been committed; and so must we pardon injuries wholly and fully, as if there had never been any done us. This the Apostle observes towards the Galatians, who were a people as injurious to his ministry and authority as any could be; and yet he forgives it so fully, that he tells them, Gal. iv. 12, *Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.* And, to express all this, we must blot out the remembrance of all wrongs, and be ready cheerfully to take all occasions to do good unto them: yea, not only to take them, but to seek them: this will be a plain evidence, that no leaven of malice or revenge hath soured our spirits.

Well, then, to sum and close up all: what is it thou canst plead for revenge, which the consideration of God's pardoning thee will not abundantly answer? Is it, that the wrongs, that others have done thee, are great and insupportable? what! are they more intolerable, than thy sins against God? Is it, that he is a vile and inferior person unto thee? how much more art thou so unto God! Is it, that he hath often wronged thee? are they not *ten thousand talents*, that God hath forgiven thee? Is it, that he will be emboldened to wrong and injure thee again? possibly so: but thou art not certain of it: however, consider how often thou hast abused the mercy of God, to encourage thee in sinning against him. Is it, that men will think thee base and cowardly, if thou puttest up such wrongs and injuries? seek thou the honour that cometh from God, and not the vain foolish repute of men. But is God indeed accounted faithful, in pardoning thee? or doth he spare thee, because he dare not strike thee? Certainly, there is no offence, nor an aggravation of any offence, that can be pleaded as a reason for revenge, but the same may, in a greater measure and in a higher proportion, be pleaded why God should revenge himself upon thee: and yet, if, notwithstanding this, thou hopest for pardon and forgiveness from him, go thou to thy brother and do likewise.

And thus I have finished the Fifth Petition: the matter of which being of such vast and important consequence, I have expatiated beyond what my first intended method would allow. I shall contract myself in what remains, and keep myself within the limits of an Exposition.

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vi. We are now come unto the SIXTH and last Petition of this most Excellent and Divine Prayer: which some divide into two; making the one negative, *Lead us not into temptation;* and the other positive, *but deliver us from evil.* But the matter being not great, whether they be one or two, I shall not contend about it.

1. And here, before I come to speak of the petition itself, I shall, as I have done in the former, speak something concerning the reason and wisdom of its *Order* and *Method.*

And the only thing that I shall remark, is, that, whereas it immediately follows upon that petition wherein we beg the pardon of our sins, that we may not be led into temptation; this ought to teach us, that it should be our care, not only to seek for the pardon of our past sins, but to endeavour the prevention of sin for the future.

And, therefore, as, when our Saviour cured the impotent man that had lain a long time at the pool of Bethesda without relief, he gives him this caution, John v. 14, *Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee:* so, when God hath healed those mortal wounds that sin hath made in our souls by his pardoning grace, it highly concerns us, with our most exact circumspection to beware that we be not again entangled in guilt, and with our most fervent affections to pray that we may not be exposed to the *fiery darts* of the Devil to wound us anew: for relapses and recidivations are always most dangerous and fatal; and new wounds received upon old scars, most difficult to be healed.

And, indeed, without this preventing grace of God, all his pardoning grace would be but in vain. It would be fruitless to forgive sins, if God did not withal secure us for the future from running upon the score with his justice: for, such is the force and fraud of the tempter, and the corruption of our own natures so prone to comply with whatsoever he offers and suggests to us, that did not God as well give us a stock to live upon, as forgive us our former debts, we should soon run ourselves as deep in arrears as ever, and make ourselves liable to be seized on by justice and condemned to the infernal prison.

And, therefore, that God's grace in forgiving our trespasses may not be in vain, our Saviour hath taught us to subjoin this request,

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. And, thus much, for the connection of this petition with the foregoing.

2. The *Petition* itself contains in it two branches: the one, against temptations; the other, against the prevalency of them. *Lead us not into temptation:* suffer us not to be assaulted and buffeted by the Wicked One. Or if, O Lord, thou shalt, in thy all-wise counsel and purpose, permit us to be tempted, yet *deliver us from* the *evil* to which we are tempted: let us endure temptations as our afflictions; but let us not consent to them, and make them our sins.

(1) It is the former of these, that I shall first speak to: and, therein I shall endeavour to show:

What Temptations are. And, How God may be said to lead us into temptation: for that is supposed, when we pray he would not do so.

[1] What Temptations are. Temptation, according to the proper signification of the word, is no other but a Trial or Probation.

And this may be of two kinds: exploratory, or suasory.

There is an Exploratory Temptation; to search out and to discover what is in man, what his graces and corruptions are.

There is a Suasory or Enticing Temptation, that inclines the will and affections to close with what is presented to them.

1st. Now, in general, we may observe Five several sorts of temptations: whereof some are of the former, others of the latter kind.

Some, whereby one man tempts another. Some, whereby we tempt ourselves. Some, whereby we tempt God. Some, whereby God tempts us. And, some, whereby the Devil tempts us.

(1st.) There are some temptations, whereby one man tempts another.

And such temptations may be faultless, when they come only by Exploration: either to find out men's great excellencies; thus the Queen of Sheba came to tempt or *to prove Solomon with hard questions:* 2 Chron. ix. 1; to know whether his wisdom was answerable to the fame that went of it: or else to find out and discover their rottenness and hypocrisy; and thus the church of Ephesus is commended, for tempting or trying those who said they were apostles and were not, finding them to be liars. But it is devilish: when it is either by Suasion unto that which is evil; thus the lewd woman tempted the young fool, Prov. vii. 18: or with a design to entrap or draw any into danger; thus the old prophet tempted the young prophet, being vexed that God should honour him with so important a message, whilst he was passed by, and knowing that God would not suffer his disobedience to go unpunished, in 1 Kings xiii. 18, and such was the wicked plot laid by the Pharisees, Luke xx. 22, when they came and asked our Saviour, whether it was lawful to pay tri-

bute to Cæsar or not; which, if he had affirmed, would have lessened his repute among the people, and made them to fall off from him, because they looked upon Cæsar but as an usurper, and groaned for deliverance from the Roman yoke of bondage, yea, and many of them hoped and expected that this would have been effected by our Saviour; or, if he had denied, it would have brought him into danger of his life as an enemy unto Cæsar, as afterwards he was accused to be.

(2dly.) There is a way of temptation, whereby a man tempts himself. And that is praiseworthy, when it is only by Exploration and Trial of his own heart, to find out what graces and what corruptions lodge there. Thus we find the Saints in Scripture often examining and proving themselves: and every Christian is commanded expressly so to do: 2 Cor. xiii. 5, *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves.*

But it is wicked and sinful, in two cases.

[1st.] Then a man wickedly and sinfully tempts himself, when, by presuming upon his own strength, he unnecessarily runs into danger, and ventures upon the next occasions of sinning.

For this is to come within the Devil's purlieus; and, if any such be made his prey, they must thank their own venturousness and folly. Thus we tempt ourselves to the commission of those sins, which we beforehand know such company, or such employments, or other like circumstances will prompt us to commit.

[2dly.] A man is said to tempt himself, *when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed:* James i. 14.

For, whensoever any particular sinful object is propounded, it is his lust, that excites the heart to close with it and embrace it. This is, indeed, the great tempter, without which other temptations to evil would be but weak and ineffectual. And though possibly they might prevail, through the innate liberty of our wills; yet, were it not for our corruptions that cleave unto us, temptations would have no more advantage upon us than our own free choice, and we might as easily reject as consent unto them.

(3dly.) There is a temptation, by which we are said to tempt God. For the Scripture frequently witnesseth that God is tempted by us: Exod. xvii. 2, Moses, chiding the people of Israel, expostulates with them: *Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?* And God himself complains of it: Num. xiv. 22, that they had tempted him ten times. Mal. iii. 15. Acts. xv. 10, and divers other places.

God is therefore tempted by us; not, as we are, unto evil: for this the Apostle expressly denies: James i. 13, *God cannot be tempted with evil.* But,

[1st.] Tempting of God, is sometimes taken for a presumptuous trying of the Providence of God, when we have no warrant nor necessity to cast ourselves upon the extraordinary effects of it.

Thus Christ answers the Devil, tempting him to precipitate himself from the pinnacle of the temple, upon confidence of an extraordinary and miraculous support from God: *It is written*, says he, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God:* Matt. iv. 7: that is, we must not put God upon working of miracles for our deliverance, when we may keep ourselves from the danger in an ordinary providential way.

[2dly.] Tempting of God, is oftentimes the same with provoking him.

And therefore we find them put together, Ps. xcv. 8, *As in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.* And, therefore, look how God may be said to be provoked, so he may be said to be tempted: that is, both in condescension to our capacities, and in reference to the effects of it: for, as a man, that is provoked, is tempted to take revenge upon him, that hath done him the injury; so God expresseth himself as provoked by our sins, and tempted thereby to inflict wrath and vengeance upon us for them. But this is only figuratively. As for any proper temptation, by any new motion or inclination wrought in the Divine Will by the presence of any new object, so God cannot without blasphemy be said to be tempted.

(4thly.) There is a temptation, whereby God is said to tempt us.

Now this is always holy and just; and it is only a temptation of trial and probation. Sometimes, it is to discover his people's graces: and so he tempted Abraham, that his obedience might be conspicuous: Gen. xxii. 1. And, sometimes, to discover their corruptions: so he tempted Hezekiah: 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, it is said, that *God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart:* not but that God knew it before, for he is the Searcher of the Heart and the Trier of the Reins: but that hereby it might be discovered and made apparent; and that Hezekiah, by the discovery of his pride and corruption, might take occasion to humble himself the more deeply before God.

(5thly.) There is a temptation, whereby Satan tempts us.

Yea, it is his proper work, and that from which he hath his name ὁ πειραζων, the tempter: 1 Thess. iii. 5, *Lest by some means the tempter have tempted you.* Now as God tempts only by Exploration and Trial: so the Devil always tempts by Suasion; inducing us by all possible arguments and motives to the commission of sin, that he

may have advantage to accuse us of it, and hereafter to torment us for it.

Now among these many various kinds of temptations which have been reckoned up, those temptations, which we are to pray against, are of three sorts: such as proceed from our own lusts and corruptions; such as proceed from other men's persuading us, either by motives or examples unto that which is evil; or, lastly, such as proceed from the Devil.

Or, else, they may be reduced to those two heads: the temptations which proceed from our own inbred lusts and corruptions; and those, which proceed from the Devil: for, indeed, wicked men are but his agents and instruments, when they tempt us to that which is evil.

2dly. Now, that our Saviour Christ should make it the great matter and object of our prayers to beg of God that we may not be led into temptation, we may observe, that it is a Christian's Duty, not only to keep himself from sin, but also to endeavour to keep himself from temptation to sin. For,

(1st.) Is it a very ill sign of a rotten and carnal heart, to be content to lie under a temptation, although it doth not consent to the commission of sin.

It speaks some kind of contentment and complacency that we take in the sin, when, though we do not commit it, yet we are very well pleased to hear of it, and to entertain motions and solicitations to it. This argues the soul is not chaste towards God, that, though we cannot enjoy it in commission: yet we will make some recompense to ourselves for the scrupulousness of our consciences, by enjoying it in the temptation.

(2dly.) If you suffer a temptation to lodge in your hearts, you are in imminent danger of being prevailed upon by it.

The temptation will be continually gathering strength: and your opposition against it may, in some time, flag and grow remiss; and objects and opportunities and such like advantages may add such a force to the temptation, as may hurry you away into the commission of the sin, contrary to your former resolutions. You can promise yourself no safety, no not from the commission of the vilest sins, as long as you suffer the temptation to abide upon you. Puddles, that stand long unmoved, will, at last, breed filthy and venomous creatures: so a temptation, that lies long unmoved and undisturbed upon you, will form some filthy and loathsome sin or other. The only secure way, is, to strike at the temptation itself; to cut that off: and then there is no danger to be feared from the sin.

This is the course St. Paul took: 2 Cor. xii. 8, when he was buffeted by a *Messenger from Satan;* that is, assaulted by a temptation: he not only takes care that he might not yield to it; that was not altogether enough for a truly gracious soul to do; but he labours to be rid of the temptation itself: *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice,* that is often, *that it might depart from me.* He prays, not only that he may be kept from the sin, to which he was tempted; but that he might be freed also from the temptation itself.

(3dly.) Consider, that, as all temptations are dangerous; and that we have great reason to fear, lest in the end, they should prevail upon us to commit the sin, to which we are tempted: so most of them are not only temptations, but sins also.

Indeed, there is a temptation to sin, which is a temptation only, and no sin: for so Christ himself was tempted: Matt. iv. 1. He *was led into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil.* And we read there with what horrid temptations he was assaulted, even to worship the Devil, to distrust God, and to destroy himself. And yet, as black as these temptations were, they were only temptations, and no sins: for so the Apostle tells us, Heb. iv. 15, he was tempted in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. And, such, sometimes, are the temptations, wherewith the Devil assaults the children of God, horrid and hellish temptations; even to deny the very being of God, the truth of the Scriptures, the immortality of the soul, heaven and hell; and such bubblings of blasphemies against the very fundamentals and ground-works of religion: and yet if we be watchful presently to abhor and reject these injections of Satan, and to cast back into his face these his *fiery darts* which he shoots into our souls; they are not our sins, though they are our troubles; but they shall be charged upon Satan to whom of right they do belong, we being but only passive and sufferers in them.

But, truly, the most of our temptations are sins themselves; and, therefore, we have great reason and need to pray against them; for they are sins unto sins: sins, as they are irregular and inordinate motions of our passions and affections; and unto sin, as they tend to the bringing forth of farther evil.

And such are all the temptations of our inbred lusts and corruptions, when our desires and affections strongly incline us to those objects, which God by his express law hath forbidden us.

Were it not for these sinful temptations, the others, which are immediately injected by the Devil, would not have any great advantage to prevail over us; for by reason of our lusts and corruptions, our hearts always stand open to let in the Devil; and, were it not

that these have seized on the soul, the Devil must have stood without, and, though he had knocked, yet would he have knocked in vain.

And therefore we see, in his First Temptation, he deals all without doors. There was no natural lust in our first parents, to befriend him, or to betray the soul unto him. He shuts up himself, therefore, in the body of a serpent; questioning with Eve about God's commands; persuades her of the desirableness of the forbidden fruit; tells her that God's threatening was rather to fright them, than to hurt them. But, in all these methods of tempting, Satan had no admission into the soul, because lust as yet had taken no possession of it; but, ever since the corruption of our natures contracted by the commission of the first offence, the Devil doth not stand to tempt us without doors, but he enters boldly as into the house of his old friend Concupiscence: nay, as into his own *house;* for the souls of wicked men are so called, Matt. xii. 29. He is, by lust, let into the very inmost recesses and retirements of the heart: and can now propound objects immediately to our fancies; and, by our fancies, darken our understanding and affections, and incline our wills.

Again, our natural corruption, as it admits, so it entertains and cherisheth the temptations of the Devil. A spark of fire, if there were no fuel prepared for it to seize on, would presently die and vanish: and so, truly, would Satan's temptations, that are like so many sparks of hell-fire struck by the Devil into our souls; were it not for the prepared fuel, the catching tinder of our lusts and corruptions, these temptations would soon go out and expire; and be like a flash of lightning, that might possibly startle us, but could not burn us. And thus, though our Saviour Christ was grievously tempted; yet it is said, John xiv. 30, *The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me;* that is, the Devil could find no sin or corruption in him, and therefore could fasten none of his temptations upon him.

Thus we see what abundant reason there is for us to pray earnestly against temptations, whether they proceed from Satan, or from our own corruptions; the one sort being always sins of themselves, and both sorts inclining and inducing us unto sin.

3dly. But, since Satan and our own hearts prove tempters unto us, some may possibly ask, "How shall we know when it is Satan that tempts us, and when the temptation ariseth from our own corruption?"

The question is nice and difficult: yet, because it may tend to the satisfaction of some who are curious in observing the workings of their own souls, I answer:

(1st.) There is but one kind of temptations to sin, which have not

their rise and original usually from lust: and those are temptations to sin against the light and law of nature; as to the denying those truths that are clear and evident by natural reason and strong impressions on the minds of men; as the being of a God, the immortality of the soul, future rewards and punishments, and the like: or, else, the doing of those things, which are repugnant to the dictates of the law of nature; as for a man to be tempted to offer violence to himself, and to destroy himself.

It is very probable, that such temptations have not their first rise and original from our natural corruptions; but are immediately darted into the soul by the Devil: though, indeed, our corruptions too often catch at them and brood upon them, till they have, from such horrid temptations as these, conceived some horrid and monstrous sin in the soul. Such injections as these are balls of wildfire kindled in hell, and cast into the soul by the Devil; and are not our sins, any farther than they are entertained by us and consented unto.

(2dly.) As for those temptations, which have a greater compliance to the corrupt tendency and inclinations of our sinful natures, which are not to such unnatural sins as the other, it is very hard if not impossible to judge, whether they originally proceed from Satan, or from our own inbred corruptions. Usually, they both join together. If Satan first inject them, usually our lusts nurse and foster them: or, if our wicked hearts be the first parents of them, usually Satan enforceth them; and, by additional recruits of temptations, makes them more prevalent and permanent; and, by fair and specious colours, makes them more plausible and taking.

And, certainly, there being such an innumerable company of evil spirits, that, notwithstanding the great work and employment they have to do in the world, yet hell could spare a whole legion of them to garrison in one possessed man; we may not doubt, but that they are continually busy, prying into every one of our tempers. And, as long experience hath made them very sagacious in guessing at the first motions of our hearts, by the alterations they find in our fancies, or the humours of our bodies, of which they have an exact intuitive knowledge: so when, by such visible symptoms, they perceive corruption stirring in us, they presently join issue with it; and, by all their art and policy, inflame our lusts by adding new fuel to them; improving the first motions and imperfect embryos of wickedness, till they arrive to their full strength and stature.

Thus, if, by any symptoms, the Devil can perceive wrath and malice boiling within our breast, he will presently move the tongue to give it vent in opprobrious and reviling speeches; and these he

will second with injurious and violent actions. So St. James tells us: James iii. 6, the tongue *setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.*

But as a holy man, I think St. Austin, being demanded by a curious questionist concerning the origin of evil, how sin first got into the world, replied, It was not so necessary to discourse how it came into the world, as to consider how we might get it out again: so, truly, it is not so necessary critically to enquire, whence temptations come into the heart, as how they may be got out of it. And to this I may give the same answer, that Christ did to his Disciples; Matt. xvii. 21, *This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.* We ought fervently to pray, that God would rebuke the Wicked One, and cause him to depart from us: that he would, by his grace, suppress all the tumultuous rebellions of our own lusts and passions; and neither lead us into temptation, nor leave us under temptation.

And thus I have done with the First General in this petition, showing you what temptations are.

[2] The Second is, To show you how God may be said to lead men into temptation.

For it may seem very strange, that the Holy and Righteous God should have a hand in tempting of men; which is so proper a work of the Devil, and of our own corruptions.

1st. But the different manner of God's leading us into temptations, and Satan's tempting us, will sufficiently justify him from the least aspersion or suspicion of being the author of sin. And, therefore,

(1st) God is said to lead us into temptation, when he providentially presents outward objects and occasions, which do solicit and draw forth our inward corruptions.

When the temptations of our inward lusts meet with external inducements, that are cast in a man's way by God's Providence; then, as we may be said to tempt him, so God may be said to lead us into temptation. Thus Achan and Judas were, no doubt of it, covetous wretches, before the one stole the wedge of gold, and the other betrayed his master: but the temptations of those lusts were not as yet come to their strength, till the glittering of the wedge of gold and the proffered reward of the high-priest raised their covetousness to its full height. Indeed, we find the propensions of our wicked hearts strongly bent towards sin, at all times; even then, when we have no external objects propounded to excite them: but when these inward inclinations do meet with outward enforcements, as alluring objects, fit opportunities, strong persuasions from others, inducing examples, or the like, the temptation then grows head-

strong and wild to purpose; and if grace doth not rein it in with a hard hand, it will certainly hurry us into the commission of that sin, which hath so many advantages to commend it to the soul. Now all these objective temptations, God may most righteously administer to our lusts, in the common course of his Providence: and we often see he doth so: for there is no outward act of sin committed in the world, but the sinner took occasion from some Providence of God to perpetrate it. A thief steals not any thing, but what God's Providence brings in his way. The murderer slays not any man, but whom Providence offers to his sword and violence. And all the villainy, that ever was acted in the world, was by a Providence; tendering the lusts of men objects and opportunities, without which sin conceived in us could not be brought to light.

And, therefore, when we pray that God would not lead us into temptation, we pray that God. by his Providence, would so order and dispose all the occurrences of our lives, so as not to lay before us those objects, nor proffer us those occasions, which might either excite or draw forth our inbred corruptions. And, indeed, this is a most necessary petition to be preferred to the Throne of Grace: for we cannot but be conscious to ourselves, how hard a thing it is, to keep our hearts from sinful desires, when we encounter objects to excite them; and how hard a thing it is, to keep ourselves from sinful actions, when once sinful desires are excited in us.

(2dly.) God is said to lead us into temptation, when he withdraws the influences of his grace and Spirit from us, and leaves us under the power of a temptation.

Those very temptations, which, when assisted by divine grace, we could easily resist and subdue, will, when God withdraws himself from us, sadly prevail over us, and shamefully foil us. Thus, it is said, that God left Hezekiah, *to try*, or to tempt him: 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. And, indeed, since our corrupt natures are of themselves prone only unto evil, if God withdraw the auxiliaries of his grace, as for many righteous causes he often doth, every temptation, that assaults us, will ravish our consciences and captivate our souls: for all the security, that we have from the committing of the most flagitious crimes, is wholly from God's grace, either restraining or renewing us; the former holding us back from the outward act of sin, the latter weakening and destroying the inward habit and principle of sin.

And, therefore, when we pray that God would not lead us into temptation, we beg that he would still continue the influences of his grace unto us, and by them excite and quicken our graces; that

his grace may not forsake us, nor our grace fail us: that we may not be exposed to the assaults of spiritual enemies, naked and defenceless, to become a sure and easy prey unto them.

(3dly.) God is said to lead men into temptation, when he permits Satan and wicked men his instruments to tempt us: yea, sometimes he gives them commission, as well as permission; and appoints and sends them to do it.

Thus we find, in the case of Ahab: 1 Kings xxii. 20, *Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?* and an evil spirit steps forth, and very officiously accepts of the employment, as most congruous to so malicious a nature: and God sends him with his commission in the 22nd verse, *Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so:* and so he did. And, as God doth sometimes thus send the tempter, and give him commission to assault and prevail over wicked and ungodly persons; their former sins provoking him to punish them with farther impieties: so whensoever any of us are tempted, God doth at least permit Satan to sift and winnow us; sometimes to his own defeat, but too often to ours. And, in this sense, there is no temptation that befalls us, but God leads us into it. And therefore it is very observable, that, whereas in 1 Chron. xxi. 1, it is said, that *Satan provoked David to number Israel;* yet, in 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, it is said, *The Lord moved David against* Israel, *to say, Go, number Israel and Judah:* here, one and the same temptation is attributed both to God and to the Devil; but it must be understood under a diverse habitude and respect; Satan tempted him effectively, God only permissively. And, thus, God may be said to lead every man into temptation, whom he suffers to be tempted.

When, therefore, we pray that God would not lead us into temptation, we pray that he would not permit the Devil to approach near unto us, nor to cast his *fiery darts* at us: but that he would put a hook into the nose of that great Leviathan; and so bridle and restrain his fury, that he may not be able to assault us.

These now are all the ways that I know of, how God may be said to lead men into temptation: either by offering them objects and opportunities by his Providence, which may correspond with their inward lusts and corruptions, and as it were entice and call them forth: or, else, by permitting Satan and wicked men to tempt us: or, lastly, by withdrawing from us the influences of his grace and Holy Spirit, and leaving us under the power of temptations when they do assault us. But for any proper, effective, or persuasive tempting of men to sin; this is infinitely abhorrent to his pure and

holy nature: in which sense St. James tells us, James i. 13, *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.* But though God cannot thus tempt any man without a stain to his infinite purity and holiness; yet he may lead men into temptation: either providentially, or permissively, or by substracting his grace, whereby they should stand; and yet, at last, justly punisheth them for sinning. And this is no unrighteous thing with God: for he lays no constraint upon the freedom of our wills; but we sin freely, and of our own accord.

2dly. Now, although God can easily keep us from all assaults and attempts of our spiritual enemies; yet he permits us to be tempted by them, for most wise and holy ends: As,

(1st.) He leaves these Canaanites to molest us, to teach us *the wars of the Lord;* to make us continually watchful; to breathe and exercise our graces; to administer matter for our conquest, and occasion for our crown and triumph.

(2dly.) To convince us of our own utter inability to stand of ourselves, without his help and assistance; thereby engaging us to depend upon his arm, and to call for divine supplies and succours.

(3dly.) To glorify both his justice and mercy.

His justice, in giving up wicked men to the rage of temptations; to be hurried by them from sin to sin, till at last they put an end to the succession of their sins in eternal damnation.

And his mercy, in succouring of and supporting and delivering his children out of all their temptations. And, therefore, when St. Paul prayed to be freed from the buffetings of the messenger of Satan, God answers him, *My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness:* 2 Cor. xii. 9. When the Devil presumes he hath so well laid his temptations, that it is impossible for the people of God to escape his snares; yet God finds a way for their deliverance out of them all: for God holds the great Tempter under a powerful restraint, so that he cannot touch us beyond permission and commission. And therefore that place in Rev. ii. 10, is very remarkable to this purpose: *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days.* How many restraints are here mentioned to be put upon that malicious spirit! He shall *cast into prison;* whereas he would willingly cast into hell, or at least into the grave: it shall be but *some of you;* whereas his spite and rage is against all the children of God: and it shall be but *for ten days;* but for a short time: the place, the

number, the time, all limited; and that, with such a restraint, that all the pride and rage of the Devil shall not be able to exceed it.

(4thly.) God permits his own children to be tempted, that, by their victory over temptations, he may confound the malice of Satan, and commend the excellency of his own ways and service.

This highly honours God, and shames the malice of the Devil, when we are neither terrified by sufferings, nor induced by the pleasures of sin from the course of our obedience: for this evidently declares, that we are true and loyal to our Great Sovereign; that we more fear his eternal wrath and displeasure, than those light afflictions that are but for a moment; and that we find more true joy and solid delight in his service, than in the ways of sin and vanity. And therefore God calls us forth as his champions, puts his cause in our hands, and bids us resist manfully for the credit and honour of piety; and then lets loose Satan upon us, whom if we can but conquer, which certainly we shall do if we but seriously resolve it, God and angels, who from the theatre of heaven are spectators of the combat, give us their applause, and will hereafter give us our crown.

See how God glories over this baffled Devil, and upbraids him with the victorious constancy of his servant Job. God had before commended the integrity of Job: Chap. i. 8; *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* To this that Malicious Spirit sullenly replies, "*Doth Job fear God for nought?* Thou needest not glory in his ready service and obedience, when he is so well paid for it. No wonder he is so pious and devout, when he gets so well by it: but leave him a while to me, to take from him those inducements that make him so pious and holy, and I will undertake, that even this perfect and upright man shall *curse thee* even *to thy face.*" God accepts the challenge on his servant's behalf. Satan and Job enter the list. The Devil buffets him sore, destroys all his cattle, ruins his house, kills his children: yet Job shrinks not, for all this; but wrestles naked with his adversary, and foils him. See now how God rejoices at his champion's victory, and upbraids the Devil with his shameful overthrow: Chap. ii. 3, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* God repeats the same character and commendation, which he had before given him; glorying, as it were, over Satan, that Job had made his words good: yea, *and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.*

So, truly, whensoever God suffers us to be tempted, it is, that, by our conquest, he might bring honour to himself, and credit to piety and religion: for this makes it appear, that we see so much of excellency in the ways of God, that nothing in the world, whether crosses or crowns, thorns or thrones, pains or pleasures, loss or profit can in the least persuade us to balk or forsake them. And, in such a heroic champion as this, God himself glories and triumphs.

And thus I have finished the former part of this petition, *Lead us not into temptation.*

(2) The next follows, *But deliver us from evil.*

[1] Now here, before I come to speak of the words themselves, let us observe their connexion with and dependence upon foregoing words.

For, whereas our Saviour hath taught us to pray with this adversative particle, BUT: *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;* this may instruct us, that the best security against sin, is to be secured against temptation unto sin: for though it be no excuse that we are violently tempted to sin when we yield to the commission of it; yet, withal, it too often happens, that those, whom God leads into temptation, and engageth amidst the press of their enemies, it too often happens that they come off bleeding and wounded. Yet,

1st. It is no excuse for sinning, because no temptation is a compulsion. The Devil can only persuade, he cannot constrain us to sin. God may let him into the fancy, and suffer him to paint upon that the most alluring images that vice can be represented in; but, when he hath done all this, it is still our own choice, that makes us like what his pencil hath drawn there.

And, in this, lies a great difference between God's operations upon us by his grace, and Satan's by his suggestions. In that God hath an immediate access to the very elicit acts of our wills and understandings; and can and doth, by his Spirit, actuate them by an immediate energy; and call them forth not only by, but to their objects. But now these are such sacred apartments of the soul, that the Devil hath no key to them: and, therefore, his method is, to bribe the attendants on these chief powers of the soul, the fancy and the passions, to which he hath admission through the near dependence they have upon material organs, and by these to send in messages and offer proposals to it; which, yet, if it be not basely false and treacherous to its God, it may reject and disdain.

If the Devil could force men, he would likewise justify them: for that can be no sin where there is no liberty. The same temptation, which compels to any action, would likewise make that ac-

tion, to be no transgression; because laws are not given, but upon supposition of freedom. And, therefore, whosoever sins upon a temptation, sins not merely because he was tempted, but because he would sin: and though the sin had not been committed without the temptation, yet the Devil can be no farther chargeable with it, than only because his malice prompts him to persuade us.

Our own wills are the most dangerous devils, freely embracing the proffers of Satan, and consenting to our own destruction, whilst we consent to that upon which God hath threatened and entailed it.

And, therefore, when thou sinnest, think not to lay the fault upon Satan, or his evil instruments whom he makes use of in tempting: for, though it be their fault and guilt to tempt, yet it is only thine to yield: and God will not condemn thee for being tempted, which thou couldst not help; but for yielding and consenting, which is thine own free act and thine own sin also. Thou, who art drawn away by thy lewd companions, to abuse thyself and dishonour thy body by riot and luxury, or to break God's laws and man's by theft, or any other condemned crimes, though thou hast a great deal of reason to hate them, yet hast thou infinitely more reason to hate and abhor thyself. They can but persuade; they cannot compel thee: yea, if they should threaten thee with death itself unless thou consentest, yet thou liest under no force, but sinnest freely; and, upon very weak motives, dost destroy and damn thy own soul: since all motive inducing to sin must be accounted weak, when God hath over balanced them with the promise of everlasting life, and the threatening of everlasting death.

And therefore we find God, as justly, as frequently, in Scripture, charging men's perdition upon themselves; and laying the blood of their souls upon the stubborn resolvedness of their own wills: Hosea xiii. 9, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself:* John v. 40, *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life:* Matt. xxiii. 37, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem how often would I have gathered* you, *as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*

And, therefore, let your temptations be what they will, yet the sin and guilt is still your own; if, as you are led into temptations, so temptations lead you into sin.

2dly. Though it be no excuse for sinning, yet it is too seldom seen, that those, who are brought into temptation, are brought off again without contracting some guilt on their consciences by it.

For, since there is so great a correspondence between temptations and our corruptions, it would be as strange for a man, that hath been hotly assaulted by them, to have no impression made upon

him, as to carry fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burnt; yea almost as miraculous, as to walk secure in the midst of a fiery furnace untouched by the flames. There is a strong sympathy between our corrupt hearts and Satan's temptations: and, as it is with strings tuned to unisons, upon the motion of the one, the other also will move and vibrate; so is it here: the heart vibrates and is secretly affected, upon the first motion of a temptation, with some passion of delight and complacency towards that sinful object. And there is a kind of liking and approbation of it in the very first conception of our thoughts, before they are yet deliberated and digested; so that it is almost as impossible to assault us, without leaving some guilt and pollution behind them, as it is for objects rightly presented to a mirror, to make no impression of their image upon it. For, though the temptation should produce nothing but hovering and fleeting ideas, and some imperfect shadows of desires and affections in us which yet are checked and scattered, as soon as ever they begin to form themselves: yet there is not the thinnest film of a sinful thought, nor the least breathing of a sinful desire, but the Holy Law of God and his Word, which *reacheth to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and is* a judge and *a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,* doth strictly prohibit and condemn these callow, unfledged motions of our hearts, to be concupiscence, the sad effects of original sin, and the fruitful cause of all actual.

And, therefore, if we would be delivered from evil, we have very great cause first to pray, that we be not led into temptation: for some temptations do almost so inseparably follow one upon another, that this will be our best security against those secret desires and wouldings, and first smatterings and rudiments of wickedness, which else the compliance of our corrupt hearts with Satan's temptations will certainly betray us unto.

Hence it is, that, when God, in Scripture, frequently dehorts us from sin, he extends the prohibition to all temptations and occasions of sinning. Yea, those things, which, in themselves considered, may be lawfully and innocently done by us, yet because they may prove snares and temptations to us, we must as carefully refrain from them, as we earnestly desire to keep ourselves far from sin. And therefore it sufficeth not the Wise Man to command, *If sinners entice, consent thou not:* Prov. i. 10; but, that thou mayest be sure not to consent, thou must order thy actions and converse so, as that thou mayest not be enticed by them. In the 15th verse says he, *Walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path.* And so we have the same counsel given us by him in another chap-

ter: that we may not be inveigled by the allurements of a strange woman, be sure to avoid all occasions thereof: Prov. v. 8, *Remove thy way far from her: come not nigh the door of her house.* And, again, Prov. iv. 14, 15, *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it: pass not by it: turn from it, and pass away.* Here is earnestness, even to tautology, as some may profanely think: but Sacred Writ can admit of no such thing: but there are so many expressions heaped up, signifying the same thing only, to denote how great the necessity of avoiding temptations and occasions to evil is, to those, who desire to avoid the sin.

We have treacherous and deceitful hearts within us, that have often betrayed us when we have trusted them. And, I beseech you, call to mind, when you have emboldened yourselves to venture upon temptations and sinful occasions, being confident and fully resolved not to yield to them, have you not often been surprised and led away captive, contrary to your hopes, contrary to your intentions, contrary to your resolutions, contrary to the vain confidences with which you were before possessed? Methinks, former experience should make you cautious, never again to trust those hearts with such opportunities and advantages for wickedness, since they have been so often already treacherous and deceitful to us. Venture them not, therefore, upon temptations: for what security have you, that a sinful heart will not sin; yea, and betray you to commit those great abominations, which possibly you cannot now think of, without horror and shivering.

And thus much I thought fit to note to you from the connection of this part of the petition with the former, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

[2] In the words themselves, we have two things chiefly considerable: the thing, that we pray against; and the person, to whom we pray. That, which we pray against, is *evil;* that we may be delivered from it: the person, to whom we pray, is God our Heavenly Father.

1st. That, which we pray against, is *Evil.*

Some limit this word, Evil, only unto unto Satan making the sense to be, *Deliver us from the Evil One*: founding this interpretation upon that article that is joined with the original word πονηρος: but this is not always discretive, but sometimes indefinite; as for instance, Matt. xii. 35, and many other places.

And, therefore, considering the comprehensiveness of this prayer, we ought to allow the word a large extent, and to comprehend under it.

(1st) Satan: whose proper style and epithet it is to be called, *The Evil One.*

And so we find this black title given him in Scripture: Matt. xiii. 19, *The Wicked One cometh, and catcheth away that which was sown.* And, 1 John ii. 13, 14, *Ye have overcome the Wicked One.* He is the Wicked One, eminently and singularly. He is the chief author of evil: his temptations are all unto evil: his delight is only in evil: he is the father of all those, that do evil. And, therefore, this is the most proper and significant character of the Devil. But, yet, it is also ascribed unto men, according to their resemblance of him.

(2dly.) All other evils are here meant; whether they be of sin, or sorrow; whether they be transgressions, or punishments: and that, either temporal punishments, in those judgments which God inflicts upon sinners, here; or eternal judgments, such as he hath threatened to inflict upon them, hereafter.

From all these we pray to be delivered: but the greatest of all these is Sin. For,

[1st.] It is greatest in the nature of it; as being the only thing that is contrary to the greatest good, even God.

For in all other things else in the world there is something of good, even as much as derived and participated of God; and so the very devils themsleves have a metaphysical goodness in them, as they are creatures, and have received their beings and powers from God, who is the author of nothing that is evil. But sin hath not the least ray or footsteps of goodness in it: but is only defect and irregularity; and that alone, which, as his soul always hates, so his hands never made.

[2dly.] It is the greatest evil, in the effects and consequences of it.

It once turned glorious angels into hideous devils, and tumbled them down from heaven to hell; filled the world with woes and plagues; brought death and diseases, and a vast and endless sum of miseries into it: it torments and terrifies the conscience, kindles hell-flames, exposes the soul to the eternal and direful revenges of the great God; and is so perfectly and only evil, that the worst of things here, were they free from the contagion of sin, would be excellent and amiable.

To pray, therefore, against the evil of Sin, is to pray against all other evils whatsoever: for the Devil, the Evil One, cannot hurt us but by sin; and no other evil can befal us but for sin, God inflicting them as the due guerdon and reward of our transgressions. Sin, therefore, being the chief and principal Evil, and all others but retainers to it, I shall at present speak only of God's delivering us from Sin.

Now, as there are two things in sin, which make it so exceeding evil; the guilt of it whereby it damns, and the filth of it whereby it pollutes the soul: so God hath two ways to deliver us from it.

By removing the guilt already contracted, which he doth in justifying and pardoning the sinner.

By preventing us from falling into the filth and pollution of it for the future.

Of the pardon of sin, I have already largely treated, in the foregoing petition. The deliverance from evil which we here pray for is, by preventing it for the future.

2dly. And whereas we are taught by our Saviour to beg this of God our Heavenly Father, we may observe, that it is only the almighty power of God that can keep us from sin; and that will appear, if we consider either, our enemies, or ourselves.

(1st.) Consider the mighty advantages, that our great enemy the Devil, hath against us.

As he is a spirit, he is both powerful and subtle; and both these are whetted by his great malice against us. Long experience also, for above five thousand years, hath made him very polite in dealing with souls, and carrying on his own designs and interest. He knows our temper, our passions, and our inclinations; and can choose and cull out those objects, which shall infallibly strike and affect us. He waits those *mollia tempora fandi*, those easy hours of whispering his suggestions to us, when we are most facile and compliant; when we are most easily wrought upon, and made soft to his hands by some foregoing circumstances. And if, after all this, he despairs to prevail upon us as a Devil, he can quickly shift his shape, and transform himself into *an Angel of Light*, and engage our very consciences unto evil: he can disguise his temptations into impulses of the Holy Spirit, persuade us, that what he prompts us to is our duty, head his *fiery darts* with Scripture sentences, wrap up his poison in the leaves of the Bible, and wound our souls by our consciences; and certainly, this devil of light is now gone abroad into the world with all that power of deceivableness he can, and we cannot but with sad and bleeding hearts observe his too general prevalency and success. And, besides all this, he is continually present with us, follows us up and down wherever we go, and is always at our elbow to prompt us to evil and at our right hand to oppose us in that which is good. Hell has emissaries enough to afford every man a Fiend for his attendant: and these critically observe every glance of thine eyes, every flash of thy passions; and are presently ready to apply suitable temptations unto thee, and to strike thee in that part of thy soul

which is softest and most yielding. And, as the Syrians, that were sent by Benhadad to the king of Israel to intercede for him, watched every word that should fall from his mouth, that they might lay hold of it to obtain farther favour from him: so these spies of hell do watch every kind word, and every kind look of thine toward sin; and want no skill to improve them, to obtain yet greater matters from thee. Now if God did not appear to deliver us from these subtle wiles and methods of the Devil, how soon would he make fools of the wisest and most experienced Christians!

(2dly.) Consider the mighty disadvantages, that we lie under, to oppose the temptations of the Devil: which though they be many and great, yet I shall name but two, which may be found even in the best of men.

(1st.) Our inadvertency and heedlessness; through which we are often surprised into sin, and captivated by the cunning craftiness of our enemies which lie in wait to deceive.

How seldom is it, that we stand upon our guard; or, if we do, that we are completely armed! Sometimes our *shield*, sometimes our *helmets*, sometimes our *sword of the Spirit*, is wanting. How seldom is it, that we attend all the motions of the enemy! Indeed, a Christian should look round about him: for he is every where beset and encompassed about with enemies: and, whilst he is vigilant to ward one part, the Devil falsifies his thrust and wounds him in another. But, if he cannot wound on the right hand by presumption, he will try what he can do on the left by despair: if he cannot prevail by his temptations to cause us to neglect and cast off holy duties, he will tempt us to pride ourselves in the well performing of them: if he cannot make us fall, he will tempt us to be high minded because we stand; and so make our very standing the occasion of our woeful downfall: and, because we are apt to think ourselves better than others, he will tempt us to be supercilious despisers and contemners of others.

Now, O Christian, it is a very hard matter, and thou wilt find it so, thus to turn thee about to every assault: and that man had need to have his spiritual senses well exercised, that shall be able dexterously to do it. Now, when so great circumspection is scarce sufficient for our security, how can they possibly escape without fearful wounds and gashes in their consciences, who are supinely negligent of their souls; and mind not which way their thoughts, their passions, their affections incline; and so give the Devil a handle to turn their souls by which way he will! Certainly, if we do not buckle our spiritual armour close to us, but suffer the joints of it by our

heedlessness to lie open, the Devil may easily wound us whereso-ever and in whatsoever part he pleaseth. And, truly, if, through this inadvertency and want of circumspection, Adam in the state of innocency and the state of uprightness fell, when the Devil had no immediate access or admission into the inward faculties and powers of his soul; yet if Satan, who was but a young, unpractised, and unexperienced devil, could prevail with him by his wiles, to ruin himself and to betray the great trust which God had deposited in his hands for all his posterity: how much greater may we think is his advantage over us, into whom he may insinuate himself and his temptations; and, when we are busy about other things, strike and wound us at unawares!

[2dly.] Besides this inadvertency, the Devil hath another grand advantage to lead us into evil; and that is, because we are naturally prone and inclined of ourselves to those very sins to which he tempts us.

It is very hard for that place to escape, that hath enemies without and traitors within. So stands the case with us: we are not only beleagured, but betrayed: there are in our hearts multitudes of lusts, that hold intelligence with the Devil, and espouse his cause; yea, there is no one sin how vile and profligate soever, but it may find partisans in our base and wicked hearts, wherein are the seeds and principles of all impieties: and, therefore, as things of a like nature presently concorporate, as we see one drop of water diffuseth itself and runs into another; so temptations to sin, meeting with a sinful nature, are presently entertained, and as it were embodied together: for, whilst we pursue what Satan tempts us unto, we do but pursue what our own natural lusts and corruptions inclined unto before, waiting only for an opportunity of being called forth into act.

And, therefore, considering both the advantages the Devil hath against us, and the great disadvantages under which we lie; he a spirit, we but flesh; he wise and subtle, we foolish and ignorant; he experienced, we raw and unpractised; he diligent and watchful, we careless and negligent; he laying a close siege to us without, and we betraying ourselves within: it must needs be ascribed only to the goodness and grace of God, to deliver us from the commission of that evil, to which we are so fiercely and cunningly tempted.

And thus I have demonstrated the proposition, That it is only the Almighty Power of God, that can preserve us from sin.

3dly. It now remains to show you the Ways and Methods, that God takes to do it.

And these are, in the general, three: by Restraining Providences,

by Common and Restraining Grace; and by Sanctifying and Renewing Grace.

(1st.) God delivers us from evil, by Restraining Providence: putting a hook into men's nostrils, and a bridle into their jaws; and, by a powerful hand, reining them in when they are most fiery and furious.

And thus he often doth with the worst and vilest of men, whose lusts, though they estuate and boil within, and are like the raging sea, raging and rolling in their hearts; yet God sets bounds to their proud waves, and saith to them as he doth to the great sea, "Hitherto shall you proceed, and no farther." It is to this we owe it, that the wickedness of men hath not yet made the world an uninhabitable desert; that solitudes and wildernesses are not as secure retreats as frequented cities, and savage beasts as safe company as men. To this we owe it, that almost every one is not a Cain to his brother, an Amnon to his sister, a Judas to his Master, and a Devil to all the world: for, where grace doth not change, Divine Providence doth many times so chain the sinner, that he cannot bring forth that wickedness he hath conceived; that, although he be permitted sin enough to destroy himself, which his very will and affection to evil is sufficient to do, yet, through God's withholding opportunity or abilities from him, his sins are not permitted to break out to the ruin and destruction of others. Though God doth, as it were, permit them to give up their hearts to the Devil, yet he ties up their hands: let them imagine and intend as much mischief as hell can inspire them with, yet none of all this shall they execute, any otherwise than as his Holy and Wise Providence permits. Yea, Divine Providence is effectual, not only in keeping wicked men from outward acts of sin, but even God's dearest children and servants: they also have a great deal of corruption stirring in their hearts; and, even in them, lust is too fruitful, conceiving those wickednesses which God often by his Providence so stifles and strangles in the very birth. May not the best of us, with thankful acknowledgments of the divine goodness towards us, reflect back upon many disappointments that we have met with, to which we had given our consent, and entertained purposes of sinning? May we not all say, Had not God denied opportunities, or cast in diversions, or cut off the provisions which we had made for our lusts, we should at such or such a time have dishonoured the Gospel, scandalized our profession, opened the mouths of wicked and ungodly men to blaspheme the Holy and Reverend Name of God, and contracted to our own consciences black and horrid guilt, by the

commission of some infamous crimes of which we were guilty by consenting to them? God hath hedged up the broad-way with thorns; that so he might turn us into the narrow-way that leads to eternal bliss and happiness.

Now the particular methods that Divine Providence makes use of, to prevent the sins of men, are many and various, and all of them wise and just.

[1st.] Sometimes, God, by his Providence, cuts short their power, whereby they should be enabled to sin.

All that power, that wicked men have, is either from themselves, or their associates whom they make use of to accomplish their wickedness. And, sometimes, Divine Providence strikes them in both. It cuts off their instruments for Counsel: and, thus, Providence, overruling Absalom to reject the counsel of Ahithophel, prevents all that mischief, that so wise and so wicked a statesman might afterwards have contrived: upon which he goes home and hangs himself; and, as if his sagacity forsook him not in his death, by that last action gave a prophetic omen of his master's attending destiny. Sometimes, God cuts off their instruments for Execution: so God miraculously defeated the huge and vast host of the blaspheming Rabshakeh; and, by unseen strokes slew almost two hundred thousand of them dead upon the place. Sometimes, God immediately strikes their persons, and disables their natural faculties: so he smote the men of Sodom with blindness; and put out those very eyes, that had kindled in them the flames of unnatural lusts: thus, likewise, when Jeroboam had stretched forth his hand to lay hold on the prophet, God suddenly withers it up. Sometimes, he hides their wits from them, and besots them: so the Jews, in John vii. 30, sought to have apprehended Jesus; and, though he was in the very midst of them, and there was enough of them to do it, yet God so astonishes them, that they only stand gazing on him, whilst he passes through the crowd of them and escapes away. And indeed, it is a great mercy of God, to take away that power from men, that he sees they will only use to their own destruction. And, though wicked men would think that if God should now strike them dumb, or blind, or lame, or impotent, that it would be a heavy plague or curse inflicted upon them: yet, believe it, it is far better that God should strike thee dumb, than that ever thou shouldst open thy mouth, to rail at him and his people; better thou wert striken blind, than that ever the Devil and filthy lusts should enter into thy soul, by the windows of thine eyes; better that thou wert maimed, than that ever thou shouldst have power to commit those

sins which well damn, if but intended, but if executed will sink the soul sevenfold deeper into damnation.

[2dly.] Sometimes, Providence prevents sin, by raising up other Opposite Powers against a sinner.

Thus God defeated the designs of the Scribes and Rulers, who hated Christ: and, oftentimes, they would have put him to death; but, it is said, *They feared the people*, whom his doctrine, his miracles, and his course of life had obliged to himself. Instances of this nature are many, and occur familiarly.

[3dly.] Sometimes, Providence casts in some seasonable Diversion, which turns men off from the commission of those sins, which they had intended.

Thus the providential passing by of merchants induced the patriarchs to sell their brother Joseph, whom before they had determined to famish. As skilful physicians, when one part of the body is oppressed with ill and peccant humours, draw them to another part less dangerons; so God, by his Providence, many times turns men from the commission of greater sins to a lesser sin. And I believe there are but a few men, who, if they will but seriously examine their lives, may produce many instances both of the Devil's policy in fitting them with occasions and opportunities of sinning, and of God's Providence in causing some urgent affairs, or some sudden and unexpected accidents to intervene, whereby they are turned off from what they purposed.

[4thly.] Sometimes, by his Providence, he takes off the Objects, against which they intended to sin.

Thus God preserved St. Peter from Herod's ambitious rage. He intended, the next morning, to put him to death; but, that very night, God sends his angel to work his escape, and thereby hinders the execution of that wicked purpose. And thus, in all ages, God, many times, hides his children from the fury of wicked men, that their wrath against them, like Saul's javelin, misseth David and striketh only the wall, from whence it often rebounds back into their own faces.

These now are some of the most remarkable Methods of Divine Providence, in preventing the sins of men. And I am very prone to think, that there are very few, who, if they will be at the pains to reflect back upon and strictly examine that part of their lives that is past and gone, they may easily produce many remarkable instances, both of the Devil's policy in fitting them with opportunities and occasions of sinning, and of God's Providences in causing some immergent affairs, or some other strange and unexpected accidents to interpose, so that he hath either graciously taken away our power,

or taken away the objects of our lusts, or diverted us when we were in the pursuits of them. To this we owe much of the innocency, and in some respects blamelessness of our lives; that we have not been a scandal to the gospel, a shame to the good, and a scorn to the bad. And this is the First way how God preserves from sin by his Providence.

[2dly.] God preserves from sin by his Restraining Grace.

Now this Restraining Grace is that, which is common, and vouchsafed to wicked men as well as good. Indeed, God by it deals in a secret way with the very heart of a sinner; and though he doth not change the habitual, yet he changeth the present actual disposition of it: so as not only by external checks laid upon men's lusts, but by internal persuasions, motives, and arguments, they are taken off the prosecution of those very sins, which yet remain in them unmortified and reigning.

Thus Esau comes out against his brother Jacob with a troop of two hundred ruffians, intending doubtless to take revenge upon him for his birth-right and blessing; but, at their first meeting, God, by a secret work so mollifies his heart, that, instead of falling upon him to kill him, he falls upon his neck and kisses him. Here God restrained Esau from that bloody sin of murder: not in a way of external providence only, but, with his own hand, he immediately turns about his heart; and, by seeing such a company of cattle bleating and bellowing, timorous women and helpless children bowing and supplicating to him, he turns his revenge into compassion, and, with much urging, receives a present from him whom he thought to have made a prey.

The same powerful restraint God laid upon the heart of Abimelech, a heathen king: Gen. xx. 6, where God tells him, *I withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.* Here was nothing visible, that might hinder Abimelech; but God invisibly wrought upon his heart, and unhinged his sinful desires.

And, from these two instances of Esau and Abimelech, we may clearly collect, how Restraining Grace differs both from Restraining Providence and from Sanctifying Grace.

From Providence it differs, because, usually, when God providentially restrains from sin, he doth it by some visible apparent means, which do not reach to work any change or alteration upon the heart, but only lay an external check upon men's sinful actions: but, by Restraining Grace, God deals in a secret way with the very heart of a sinner; and, although he doth not change the nature of it, yet he alters the present inclination of it, and takes away the desire of committing those sins which yet he doth not mortify.

And, from Sanctifying Grace it differs also, in that God vouchsafes it to wicked men and reprobates; to the end that their lives may be more plausible, their gifts more serviceable, and their condemnation more intolerable. And, indeed, the efficacy of this Restraining Grace may be so great, that there may appear but very little difference between the conversation of a true Christian whom special grace sanctifies, and the conversation of one in a state of nature whom common grace only restrains: they may both live outwardly without blame or offence, avoiding the gross pollutions of the world, and shine in a sphere above the ordinary sort of men; and yet the one be a star, and the other but a meteor. The highway may be as dry, and as fair, in a frosty winter, as in a warm summer; but there is a great deal of difference in the cause of it: in summer, the sun dries up the moisture; in winter the frost binds it in. So, the ways of those, who have only a restraint laid upon them, may be as fair and clear as the ways of those who are truly sanctified; but the cause is vastly different: grace hath dried up the filth of the one, but only bound in the filth of the other.

Now God doth thus, by his Restraining Grace, preserve men from sin, by propounding to them such considerations and arguments, as may be sufficient to engage conscience against it, when yet the will and affections are still bent towards it. Restraining Grace thunders the curse of the Law, and brandisheth the sword of justice in the face of a sinner; reports nothing but hell and everlasting torments, and such terrible things, which may scare men from their sins, though still they love them. It is, indeed, a great mercy of God to keep us from sin, even by legal terrors; and, usually, these are a good preparation and introduction for saving grace. Doubtless, the thoughts and fears of hell have, with very good success, been made use of, to keep men from those sins that lead unto hell. But yet, if, in our conflicts against temptations, we can draw arguments from no other topics but hell, and eternal death, and destruction; if we cannot as well quench the *fiery darts of the Devil* in the blood of Jesus Christ, as in the lake of fire and brimstone; it is much to be doubted, whether our abstaining from sin be from any higher principle than what is common: only for fear of punishment, and not for love of God or goodness.

(3dly.) God hath another method of keeping men from sin; and that is by his Special and Sanctifying Grace.

And this is proper only to the children of God, who are really sanctified and made gracious. Now, whatever sin God doth thus preserve any from, he doth it by exciting the inward principle and

habit of grace to the actual use and exercise of it. There is a two-fold grace always necessary to keep the best Christians from sin; Habitual and Exciting: and God, by the one, quickens and stirs up the other, which else would lie sluggish and dormant. Habitual Grace denominates the soul alive unto God; but it is no otherwise alive, than a man in a swoon is: it is only Exciting and Influential Grace, that can enable it to perform the functions and offices of life. In the dreariest winter, there is life in a seed, that lies buried under ground; but it acts not, till the sun's influence draws it forth: but then it heaves and shoves away the earth that covered it, and spreads itself into the beauty of a flower and fruit. So is it here. Inherent Habitual Grace is, indeed, an immortal seed: and it is but a seed, till the influences of an approaching God awaken it, and chafe its benumbed virtue; and then it stirs and thrusts away all that dung and filth of corruption under which it lay buried, and flowers into Actual Grace. Habitual and Influential Grace must both concur to produce Actual Grace; as necessarily, as there must be both the concurrence of the heat of the sun, and the life of the root, to the production of a flower.

Now God, by exciting the Inherent and Habitual Grace, which was before in the soul, keeps men from sinning two ways.

[1st.] Hereby he prevents and excludes those sins, which were we not employed in the exercise of Grace, we should certainly commit.

When the soul is constantly employed in holy and spiritual affairs, sin then neither hath room nor opportunity to exert itself. It is kept out of the thoughts, when they are employed about holy meditations. It is kept out from the affections, when they are set upon heavenly objects. It is kept out from the conversation, when both the duties of our general and particular callings are duly performed in their respective seasons. The Apostle exhorts us, Eph. iv. 27, not to *give place to the Devil.* Truly, when God's Exciting Grace quickens our Inherent Grace to a continual exercise; when every faculty is filled with holy actions, and every season with holy duties; the Devil then can have no place to tempt, nor corruption to stir. It is the best security God can give us from the commission of evil, to quicken us to the performance of what is good. When we hear, pray, or meditate, or attend upon the public ordinances, we ought to bless God for this his Exciting Grace; whereby we have not only performed a duty, but also possibly escaped some foul and notorious sin, which else we might have committed. We, who are here this day before the Lord, had we neglected, as so many

others do this present opportunity; who of us know what horrid temptations and fearful sins we might, in our own houses, have been exposed unto, which, in God's House, we have avoided? David, when he walked idly upon the roof of his house, lies upon to the snares of the Devil; and falls into those foul sins of adultery and murder: had he then been at his harp and his psalms, he might thereby have driven the Evil Spirit from him; as, formerly, he was wont to do for his master Saul. Running streams preserve themselves clear and pure: whereas standing puddles soon grow corrupt, and breed noisome and venomous creatures: so is it with the heart: whilst God's Exciting and Quickening Grace puts it upon continual exercise, it is preserved from corruption; but when it once grows sluggish and doth not freely flow forth into the actings of grace and the performance of duties, the spawn of all manner of sins will breed there, and filthy lusts crawl to and fro without disturbance.

And, therefore, in praying that God would deliver us from evil, we pray that he would continually vouchsafe unto us the quickening influences of his Holy Spirit; that he would always fill our sails with that wind, that bloweth where it listeth: *Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south* wind; and *blow upon* our *garden, that the spices thereof may flow* forth: for, indeed, if the spices do not, the stench will.

[2dly.] As God, by his Exciting Grace, hinders those sins, which might arise in the heart; so he suppresseth those, that do arise.

There is the greatest contrariety imaginable, between Inherent Grace and indwelling Sin. When the one is vigorous, the other languisheth. And both of these opposite principles have their seat in the same heart; and both of them are in a continual expectation of an exciting influence to call them out into act. Indwelling corruption is usually roused up by temptations: and, when it stirs in the heart, and is ready to break forth into the life, Habitual Grace is of itself so feeble, that it cannot make any opposition, until a kindly influence from the Spirit of God calls forth some particular grace, that is most of all contrary unto it, to resist and subdue it.

This method God used, to keep St. Paul from sinning. He was under a sharp and pungent temptation, which he calls a *thorn in the flesh:* 2 Cor. xii. 7. Satan buffets; and he prays: and God answers, *My grace is sufficient for thee:* "My grace is sufficient, not thine. The grace, that is in thee, is weak and helpless: it is a very nothing, if I withdraw my influence from it; but the quickening grace, that flows from me, this alone is sufficient to remove the temptation, and to prevent the sin." Now, whilst God's Exciting Grace works thus upon St. Paul's Inherent Grace; this temptation, this

thorn at his breast (as they report of the nightingale) only makes him the more wakeful and vigilant. But, if God should have suspended his gracious influence, this *thorn* would sadly have wounded his conscience, by the commission of some foul and gross sin.

Now, as all manner of sin lies couched and comprehended in that body of sin, which we carry about with us; so all manner of graces are couched also in that principle of grace, which God hath implanted in his own children: and when the Devil, by a temptation, calls forth a particular sin; God also, by his exciting influence calls forth a particular contrary grace to hinder the commission of it. Thus, when they are tempted to pride, God calls forth humility to prick that swelling and puffy bladder. So, when they are tempted to wrath and passion, he stirs up meekness to oppose it: when to a murmuring and repining at God's dispensations, he puts patience upon its perfect work. And, in brief, there is no one sin whatsoever, that the Devil can, by his temptations, stir up in the heart; but God also can, and often doth, stir up a contrary grace to quell and master it.

[3dly.] But now there are Two Graces, which are more especially employed in this service: and they are an Awful Fear, and Filial Love of God.

And, therefore, when we pray that God would deliver us from evil.

(a.) We pray, that he would so affect our hearts with that dread and reverence of his Holy Majesty, that we may not dare to commit the least sin, knowingly and willingly, against him.

For the fear of God is a powerful preservative, to withhold the soul from consenting to temptation; and, when we are fully possessed with it, we shall be able to return that answer to every solicitation of the Devil, that Joseph did to the filthy enticements of his lewd mistress, *How shall* we *do this thing, and sin against God?* Yea, it will preserve us not only from the more gross and scandalous acts of sin, but from the secret lurking wickednesses that lie deep in the heart: 2 Cor. vii. 1, *Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness* and pollution both *of flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* Indeed, where this Fear of God is deeply implanted, it will keep us from offending him in our thoughts, as well as in our actions. We shall be afraid to sin against him by hypocrisy, or unbelief, or impenitency; as well as by murder, or blasphemy, or any of those flagitious crimes, which not only the law of God, but the law of nature and right reason condemn.

(b) We pray, that God would so affect our hearts with a holy and filial Love of himself, that may sweetly and yet powerfully

keep us from whatsoever may be an offence unto his Divine Majesty.

For Love would not willingly do any thing, that may offend or grieve the object loved. There is a holy ingenuity in this grace, that strongly engageth the heart to love what God loves, and to hate what he hates. Now the only object of God's hatred is sin; and, therefore, where the Love of God is implanted, it will cause such a divine sympathy of affection, that those, who *love the Lord*, will *hate sin* and iniquity; as the Psalmist speaks: Ps. xcvii. 10. And, certainly, hatred of sin is a most effectual means to keep us from committing of it.

And thus I have shown you the methods, that God useth in delivering us from evil: by his Restraining Providence; by his Restraining Grace; and by his Sanctifying and Renewing Grace.

Hence, then, see to whom you are to ascribe your preservation from evil; and from those horrid sins, that others fall into. Sacrifice not to your own net; not to the freedom of your own wills, not to any excellency in your own disposition and temper, not to your natural aversation to what is wicked and impious: but give the praise and glory, both of what thou art and of what thou art not, wholly unto God. Thy nature is as sinful as the worst of men's; and, that thy life is not as sinful and wicked as the worst, proceeds only from the goodness and grace of God, which hath made the difference: yea, a difference little less than miraculous; for is it not a miracle, that, when the fountain is as bitter in our hearts as in the hearts of others, yet that the streams should not be so? Whence is it, that, since we have the same corrupt hearts with Cain and Judas, or any of the most branded wretches in the world for sin and wickedness, that yet we have not committed the like impieties with them; but that God hath either restrained or sanctified us? But Sanctifying Grace, of itself, is not enough: for whence is it, then, that we have not committed the same sins, that those have done, who yet have been sanctified; whose foul sins and sad miscarriages are recorded for our warning? Are we more holy than they? Have we obtained a greater measure of sanctification than they? No: only our gracious God, by vouchsafing us a constant influence of his Exciting Grace, hath been pleased to keep us from those sins, into which he suffers wicked men to fall; and, not only them, but sometimes his own dear children also. Well, then, *Let not the strong man glory in his strength; but, let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord: for he is our strength and our deliverer. What have we, that we have not received? and, if we have received it, why should we boast, as if we*

had not received it? It is not what we have already received, but what we are continually receiving from God, that makes us to differ from the vilest and most profligate sinners in the world.

And thus much shall suffice, for the way and method how God doth *deliver us from evil.*

Now that, which we pray for in this petition, is,

First. That if it shall please God to lead us into temptation, yet that he would not leave us under the power of temptation; but, *with* every *temptation, he would make a way for us to escape, that we may be able to bear it.*

Secondly. That if, at any time, temptation should get the upper hand, and prevail over us to the commission of sin, yet that God would not leave us under the power of that sin; but raise us up again, by true repentance and godly sorrow, that so, at last, we may be delivered from the great and soul-damning evil of obduration and impenitency.

Thirdly. That God would not only deliver us from gross and self-condemning impieties; but from every evil way and work, and preserve us blameless to the heavenly kingdom of his Son.

Fourthly. That he would be pleased, not only to deliver us from that, which is in itself *evil;* but from all the occasions and all the *appearances of evil:* for these also are evil; if not in effect, yet in tendency.

And thus now I have finished the Sixth and Last Petition of this most Excellent and Divine Prayer of our Saviour. And, I nothing doubt, but, in the discourses I have made of it, you have seen it verified, what at first I affirmed of it: That it is a comprehensive summary of all that we can ask of God, whether it be for supplies of our temporal or spiritual wants; and that all other prayers, which we make, are but a commentary upon this, drawing that out at length, which here is closely wound up in one bottom.

This Prayer of our Saviour, now expounded unto you, consists as I told you in the beginning, of Four Parts. The Preface, or Introduction; *Our Father.* The Requests, or Petitions; which are six. The Doxology, or Praise. And, then, the Conclusion, or Ratification of all, in the word, *Amen.*

The two first I have dispatched. I now come to the

III. Third: and that is the DOXOLOGY or PRAISE; for praise is a necessary part of prayer.

This praise now is here ascribed unto God, by ascribing unto him his Attributes: *Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for Ever.*

In which words, Four of God's Attributes are mentioned, and ascribed unto him. i. His Sovereignty: *Thine is the Kingdom.* ii. His Omnipotency: *Thine is the Power.* iii. His Excellency: *Thine is the Glory.* iv. His Eternity: all these are thine *for ever.*

The Kingdom is thine for ever: the Power is thine for ever: the Glory is thine for ever. For so this particle, *for ever,* is to be distributed unto each of the foregoing Attributes.

Now, in ascribing unto God these attributes, we may consider, the Eminency and the Propriety of them.

The Eminency of them in the particle *the;* THE *Kingdom,* THE *Power,* THE *Glory*: denoting to us the highest and the chiefest of all these. For his Kingdom is that, which ruleth over all: his Power that, which no created power can control: his Glory, such, as stains all other excellencies, and makes all their light and lustre to be only the shadow of God.

The Propriety of this attribute, in this particle, *thine.* Though others may have Kingdoms, and Power, and Glory; yet these, in their eminency, belong only unto God. They are thine; and thine only, originally, infinitely. and unchangeably.

Now all these attributes of God are annexed to the petitions of this prayer by the illative particle, *for:* FOR *thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* And this carries in it the strength and force of a reason: both why we pray unto God; and, likewise, why God should grant us those things, that we pray for.

First. We pray unto God: for his is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory *for ever;* and, therefore, he alone is able to relieve and supply us.

Secondly. We plead for the obtaining of those good things, which we ask of him: therefore grant them unto us, FOR *thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory for ever.* This adds strong consolation and assurance to our faith, that we shall be heard in these requests that we present to God. For,

First. His is the Kingdom, and we are his subjects; and, therefore, we may depend upon him, as our King, for help and protection.

Secondly. His is the Power; and, therefore, he is able to supply and help us, and to do abundantly for us above what we can ask or think.

Thirdly. His is the Glory; and, therefore, since what we ask is for his honour and praise, we may firmly believe our requests shall be granted unto us. And,

Fourthly. All these are his *for ever;* and, therefore, we may rest assured, that, at no time, our prayers shall be in vain: but, as it is the same unchangeable God, who, in former ages, hath done great

things for and given great things unto his servants, who have called upon him; so he still retains the same power and the same compassion: his ear is not heavy, nor his arm shortened, nor his bowels withered: and, therefore, we may with assurance expect, that he will supply our wants, and grant our desires, since the treasures of his mercy are for ever unexhausted.

Thus every word is a forcible reason, both to oblige us to address ourselves unto God; and, likewise, to move him to bestow upon us those good things, which we thus ask at his hands.

And from hence, by the way, we may observe two things: That, in our prayers, we ought to plead with God by weighty and enforcing Reasons. That the most forcible reasons in prayer are to be taken from the Attributes of God.

First. That, in our prayers, we ought to plead with God by weighty and enforcing Reasons.

Thus, God bids us to, Take unto ourselves words, and to turn unto him: Hos. xiv. 2. And, thus, if we look into Scripture, those prayers of the Saints, which are there recorded, we shall find them disputes (if I may so call them) as well as requests; and so many reasons urged in them, as if, by dint of arguments, they would constrain God to yield to their desires. So, in Moses's prayer: Exod. xxxii. 11, 12, 13, *Why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power? Wherefore should the Egyptians say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land, that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.* And so Joshua pleads with God: Josh. vii. 8, 9, *O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?* And so Jehoshaphat: 2 Chron. xx. 6, *O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?* And so, in the following verses, he pleads with God by such powerful arguments, as if he would extort mercy and deliverance from him.

Now, although it be true that all the arguments that we can urge, and all the reasons that we can allege, cannot alter the purposes

and determinations of God, as to any event that he hath ordained, yet there is this twofold use and necessity of pleading them.

First. Because, by considering the reasons we have to pray for such mercies, our desires will be the more earnest and fervent for the obtaining of them. It will put spirits and life into our petitions, when we can represent to God the necessity of our asking; which, to his mercy, will prove a strong motive for his granting.

Secondly. Because reasons in prayer do mightily conduce to the strengthening of our faith; and give us great encouragement to believe, that we shall certainly obtain what we have so much reason to ask. Now faith and assurance of obtaining our request is a great condition to the acceptation of our prayers: and, therefore, the Apostle commands us, to lift *up holy hands;* as *without wrath,* so also without *doubting:* 1 Tim. ii. 8; and, again, James i. 6, 7, *Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For let not that man think, that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.* Now when we can humbly represent unto God, both the great necessity that we stand in of those mercies that we beg; and likewise the equity which ariseth, either from his promises past, or his Name and Attributes proclaimed, that we should receive them: what abundant strength and confidence may this add to our faith; and make us come to God with an humble expectation, that he would either answer our prayers or our reasons!

And, therefore, if thou wouldst be sure to have thy prayers answered, pray chiefly for such things, for which thou canst produce such reasons as cannot be answered. And, therefore,

Secondly. The most forcible reasons and arguments in prayer are to be taken from the Attributes of God.

These must needs be powerful, when they are himself. And if thou canst but get an attribute to take thy part when thou comest to the Throne of Grace, and if thou canst but rightly use and fit it to thy requests, thou mayest be sure of speeding: for God will not, nay he cannot deny himself. In us, there can be nothing found to move him, nor any where out of himself: and, where we find, as very often we do in Scripture, that the miseries and afflictions of God's people are made use of as a plea for mercy; yet this plea itself, which is usually most winning and most affecting, can no otherwise prevail with God, than as his pity and compassions engage him to relieve those that are in misery. And, to speak properly, they are not our afflictions, but the glory of his power and mercy in delivering us from them, that are motives unto God: only, it is the art of a praying Christian aptly to represent himself

as an object, for God's attributes to be exercised about. And, if he can but interest any name or attribute of God in his behalf, he may be confident of the success of his prayer, and that he shall not return ashamed.

These two observations I gather from the illative particle, *for*: FOR *thine is the kingdom, &c.*

i. Concerning the KINGDOM of God I shall speak but very little now, having already treated of it in explaining the Second Petition of this most Excellent Prayer, *Thy Kingdom come.*

Certain it is, that God's Universal Kingdom is here understood; as he is the High Creator and Supreme Lord of all things, both in heaven and in earth: yet not so as to exclude his Peculiar Kingdom of the Church. And this is an excellent argument, to confirm our faith, for the obtaining of those things, which we pray for: because the kingdom is God's, and he is the absolute sovereign over all; and, therefore, all things are at his disposal. As for spiritual blessings which we seek, he hath the power of bestowing of them: for he is King of his Church; and bestows the gifts and graces of his Spirit upon the faithful subjects of that his kingdom. And as for temporal blessings that we beg, he likewise can readily bestow them upon us: for he is the Universal Monarch of all the World; a king, to whom all other kings are subject, and all other thrones are but the footstool of his. And, therefore, in the general, whatsoever we want, be it protection or provision, our faith in the sovereignty of God may encourage us to ask it with an humble boldness and confidence; for it is the office of a king to give both unto his subjects.

But let us more particularly consider how God's Kingdom may be accommodated to all the petitions of this prayer of our Lord; as a strong argument and reason to prevail with God, for the obtaining what we request in each of them.

1. The Kingdom is God's, *therefore, he will see that his Name be hallowed and glorified in it.*

Kings are jealous of their honour; and it is a great offence either to speak or do any thing, that may redound to their discredit. It is fit and decent for a king, to have the highest name and the greatest repute, among his subjects: and, therefore, we may be sure God will maintain this in the world. Yea, so jealous is God of having dishonour reflected upon him, that he hath forbidden not only the profanation and trivial mention of his own Name, but the profanation of that which doth but belong unto him: Matt. v. 34, 35, *Swear not by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the Great King.* Hea

ven is the throne of his majesty, the theatre of his power; Jerusalem and the Temple, the seat of his worship: and, therefore as kings and princes have respect shown to their Presence Chamber; so God, because he is the great King of kings and Lord of lords, requires to be reverenced in all that doth appertain unto him, and he will be sanctified in all that draw near unto him. Those, who will not actually hallow him by their obedience, on them God will be hallowed passively by their punishment: and because he is a King, he will maintain the honour of his majesty and royalty. And, therefore, we may with faith pray, *Hallowed be thy Name: for thine is the Kingdom, &c.*

2. The Kingdom is God's, and, *therefore, this Kingdom shall come; it shall be maintained, it shall be established, it shall be enlarged and increased.*

Is it not the highest concern of a king, to look that his kingdom be not overthrown, and himself deposed and outed of it? So is it God's interest and concernment, to preserve his kingdom from the incursion of enemies, and the sad consequences of the rents and divisions of his subjects. He hath promised, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it; that he will enlarge the borders of it, and give all nations unto Jesus Christ for his inheritance and possession; and, therefore, when we pray, *Thy kingdom come,* we may very well expect that our requests should be granted; for the Kingdom is God's, and we do but pray that he would regard his own interest and concerns, that he would look down from heaven, and visit this vine, which his own right-hand hath planted, that neither the wild boar out of the forest may root it up, nor the cunning foxes pluck off its tender grapes.

3. The Kingdom is God's, and, *therefore we may well pray, that his will may be done in earth as it is in heaven.*

For what is sovereignty without obedience to it, but a mere pageantry, a mock-show of idle royalty? It is but fit and rational to pray, that his will should be done, whose the kingdom is. And, whilst we thus pray, we may be confident of being heard and accepted, since the reason we urge is so natural and pressing.

4. The Kingdom is God's, and, *therefore, we may, with great encouragement to our faith, pray for our Daily Bread; and all those temporal accommodations, that are needful and expedient for us.*

For it is a kingly office to provide things necessary for their subjects; to protect and defend them, to supply and relieve them; and, therefore, Ps. lxxii., where we have a perfect character of a good king, it is said, verse 6, *He shall come down like rain upon the mown*

grass; and *as showers that water the earth:* that is, he shall be to his people as soft showers to the sprouting grass, kindly nourishing it, and making it grow and flourish. And, certainly, God who is the greatest and best of Kings, will be so much more to his people and subjects; and, since he hath assumed to himself the style and name of King, he will provide abundantly for their peace and prosperity.

5. The Kingdom is God's, and, *therefore, we may well make our applications to him for Pardon, and beg of him the Forgiveness of our Offences,* since it is the prerogative royal of kings to forgive offenders.

Hence our Saviour, describing the process of the General Judgment, when he comes to speak of pronouncing the sentence of absolution upon believers, styles himself King. So we read, Matt. xxv. 34, *Then shall the King say unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom.* So that here our faith hath a very strong plea to urge with God for the pardon of our sins: *Forgive us our trespasses: for thine is the Kingdom;* and it belongs to the royalty of thy kingdom to forgive humble and penitent suppliants.

6. The Kingdom is God's, *therefore, we may well pray in faith, that he would deliver us from Evil.*

For this is one great end of government, to protect their subjects from the assaults of their enemies. And God, who is our King, will not neglect this care, when we do with an humble faith urge him to it, by representing to him, that the kingdom is his; for his interest is involved in the safety and welfare of his people.

And thus I have briefly shown you, in general, that all our prayers ought to be enforced with strong and cogent reasons: which, although they are not properly motives unto God, yet are they good grounds for our faith to build upon; and, therefore, a good evidence when we use them, that our petitions shall be heard and granted. And I have likewise particularly accommodated this first motive and argument, taught us by our Saviour, *thine is the kingdom,* to each of the Six Petitions, which he hath instructed us to present to God.

ii. The Second Attribute, that we are to consider, as a reason and motive urged in this prayer, is the POWER of God: *Thine is the power.*

1. Now Power, according to the usual acceptation of the word, is nothing else but an ability to work those changes and mutations upon created beings, which were not in them before.

I speak only of Active Power: and the two terms of it are, either the effecting of somewhat that was not, or the annulling and destroying of that which was.

This is the notion of power, whether it be ascribed to God or man. And, in both, it is either *absolute*, or *ordinate*. Absolute Power respects the simple ability of acting: Ordinate Power respects also the will and determination to act. And therefore in God, whose power we are now treating of, his Absolute Power is of a much larger extent, than his Ordinate: for the one relates to all things possible, that is, to all things whose existence doth not imply a contradiction; the other relates only to things future, and this likewise such as shall exist according to the common course and method of God's ordinary providence: for miraculous effects, although they are produced according to the will and ordination of God; yet they appertain not to his ordinate, but to his absolute power. So, then, the objects of God's Absolute Power are things merely possible, or things future; which are without the compass and sphere of second causes to produce. But the objects of God's Ordinate Power are things future, produced according to the laws of natural agents, and the virtue of second causes.

Yet both these powers in God are infinite; the one objectively, the other formally.

(1.) God's Absolute Power is objectively infinite; that is the object of it is infinite.

For all things possible are the object of this power; and all things are in themselves possible, which do not imply a contradiction. And, oh, how vast and incomprehensible is the sum of these! God might have created more worlds, more angels, and men than he hath done; more sorts of creatures, and more of every sort, if he had so pleased. Yea, and he might have been creating and acting from all eternity to all eternity; and, in his infinite duration, be still producing new, and therefore infinite effects: *for with God nothing* is *impossible:* Luke i. 37. And the only reason why God hath produced such effects and no other, so many and not more, is not from want of power, but merely from the free determination of his own will and counsel. He might have hindered the fall of man, restored the fallen angels, raised the stones to be children unto Abraham, brought more deluges and general plagues upon the world, if he had so pleased. Yea, and though our fancy and imagination hath a large empire, and seems boundless in these fictions and portraitures of things which we paint and limn there; yet God can really create more than we can only imaginarily create: for we can only patch together those things which we have seen, or have otherwise been the objects of our senses, and, by putting together several pieces of things really existing, make an idea of that which never

was; but God can actually cause those species and kinds of beings, in the world which never were, nor ever was there a former resemblance of them, and so can infinitely exceed the largest scope of what in us seems most unlimited, even our thoughts and fancies, for he is able to do above what we are able to think.

(2.) God's Ordinate Power is infinite formally; that is, those things, which he works according to the counsel of his own will, they are all effected by Infinite Power.

For, though the objects themselves are finite, both for nature and number; yet the power that produceth them is infinite: for since the essence of God is infinite, and each of his attributes is his essence, it follows likewise that his power is infinite even in the production of things that are finite.

2. Now it appears that the *Power of God is Infinite,*

(1.) By the Works of Creation.

For though the things that are created are finite, and but a few in comparison with those that are possible; yet it is no less than the Infinite Power of God, that can impregnate the vast womb of nothing, and make it bring forth a being. It must needs be an Almighty Word, that can call forth a creature out of non-existence, and make it start up into the rank of things that are. And, therefore, we find God often ascribing it to himself as a glorious demonstration of his Almighty Power, that he spread forth the curtains of the heavens; that he laid the beams of the earth; that he hung out those glorious lights of the sun, moon, and stars; that he breathed forth all the various sorts of the creatures which people the universe, and by the commanding word of his mouth they were made His power and his hand formed all those beautiful creatures we behold, out of a rude and confused chaos; and that chaos itself, out of the greater confusion of nothing: and although Second Causes, by their power and natural energy, introduce various forms into things; yet all the matter they have to work upon, was first God's workmanship, and there is nothing made by man but it is the creature of God, at least to the matter and first principle of it. Now, it is only Infinite Power, that can bring something out of nothing: yea, and it is infinite creating power, that can form things out of matter utterly indisposed to receive the stamps of such natures as God imprints upon them; for no created agent can work, either where there is nothing to work upon, or where it is altogether unfit and uncapable naturally to be formed into such a being as the agent intends: and, therefore, the Apostle tells us, Rom. i. 20, that *the invisible things of* God *from the creation of the world are clearly seen,*

being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

(2.) The Infinite Power of God demonstrated in those Miraculous Effects which have been extraordinarily produced in the world.

It must needs be an Almighty Arm, that can arrest the course and impetus of nature, and turn it quite contrary to its own bias: for no created powers, either in heaven or earth, can, by their efficacy, work a miracle: nay, they cannot be so much as natural instruments, but only moral, in the production of what is miraculous. Indeed angels, both good and bad, may produce very strange and marvellous things by their sudden, invisible, and effectual applying of proper actives to passives; and, by suiting the secret and unknown virtues of causes to fit and disposed patients: but they cannot produce any thing that is miraculous, and wholly either above or contrary to the course and sphere of nature. And those men, who have been so highly dignified as to be the moral instruments of miracles; as we say that Moses, and Elijah, and the Apostles of Christ wrought many miracles: yet they did not perform those works by any natural or proper physical influence, but only by their prayers and commanding faith. It is God alone, that is the immediate efficient cause of whatsoever events have been miraculous in the world: and, therefore, when some raised the dead, and others cured the blind and lame, when Moses first cleft the sea and afterwards the rock with his wonderous rod, when Joshua stopped the sun in its course, and Isaiah turned it ten degrees backward; all these extraordinary and supernatural effects are no otherwise to be ascribed unto them, than as to remote instruments, who, by their prayers and intercessions, prevailed with God to manifest his power, as an attestation of that commission they had received from him. His Infinite Power is the sole author of them: and to this end hath he wrought them, that those, who take little notice of his power, in the common and ordinary products of it, may be seized with admiration and astonishment, when they hear of such events, as neither reason nor nature can give any account of; and may be forced to acknowledge, with the magicians of Egypt, that it is the finger of God; or, more religiously, with the Psalmist, Ps. lxxxix. 13, *Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right-hand.*

(3) The Power of God is infinite, even in the Common Course and Effects of his Providence.

Whatsoever comes to pass is through the Infinite Power of God. There is not the least spire of grass that sprouts out of the earth, not the least atom that plays and wanders to and fro in the air, not

any motion of any creature how inconsiderable soever it be, but the Almighty Power of God is to be seen in it. For, although one Second Cause may depend upon another, in a long series; yet are they all ultimately resolved into the First Cause of all, and invigorated by his influence. See, for this, Hosea ii. 21, 22, *I will hear the heavens, saith the Lord; and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.* Be the chain of Second Causes never so long, yet God holds the first link in his own hands, and conveys his power through them all to their last effects. So that, if we duly ponder the mysteries and wonders of nature, it will appear that it is as much Infinite Power to make a poor worm to crawl, or a sparrow to fly or to fall to the earth, as it was at first to create the world. It requires no more power in God to work miracles, than the most ordinary and common events that happen: only, those are said to be miracles, which are against or above the course of nature; and those to be natural events, which are according to it: but, to a considering mind, both the one and the other do equally declare the Almighty and Infinite Power of God.

3. Now this power is, in the text, ascribed to God *by way of emphasis and eminency: Thine is the Power:* which notes unto us some peculiarity in the power of God, which distinguisheth it from all created powers whatsoever.

And it consists in these following things.

(1) In that the power of God is Infinite; as hath been demonstrated already: but the power of all creatures is only finite and limited.

God's Absolute Power hath no bounds; but whatsoever is possible to be, he is able to produce. His Ordinate and Actual Power is, indeed, limited; but only by his own will: Ps. cxv. 3, *He hath done whatsoever he pleased.* But our wills are often limited by our power; and those things, which we wish the accomplishment of, yet many times fail in taking effect, only because we want might and power to bring them to pass. And, therefore, when we ascribe power unto God, *Thine is the Power,* we attribute unto him a power, that is infinite: a power, which can effect whatsoever his will hath fore-determined, above, yea, and contrary to all the power of all the creatures, both in heaven and earth. Hence it is called, *the exceeding greatness of his power:* Eph. i. 19.

(2) The power of God is Originally in himself: but all created powers are only derived from him.

Whatsoever is in God is, according to the known rules of the Schools, God himself. And, therefore, as God hath not his being

from any other, so neither hath he his power from any other: but whatsoever ability is found in any of the creatures, is from God, whether it be natural or moral power, strength or authority.

[1] All derive their natural power from God. It is he, that endues them with strength; and with all that force and might which they enjoy: 1 Chron. xxix. 12, *In thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is, to make great, and to give strength unto all.*

[2] All derive their moral power and authority from God: Prov. viii. 15, 16, *By me kings reign, and princes decree justice: By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth:* says the Essential Wisdom of the Father.

(3) The power of God is Supreme: all other power is but subordinate unto him.

And, therefore, he can weaken the strength and frustrate the attempts of all that shall combine themselves together against him; for his power is such, as no creature can resist. And, as billows do but dash themselves in pieces, by dashing against the rock; so all the united forces of nature, should they make head against God, would but dash themselves in pieces, by dashing against the Rock of Ages, whose counsels and purposes shall stand firm, though all the world dissent from them, and endeavour to oppose them. Yea, the power of God is so absolute and sovereign, that the greatest created powers are but instruments, for God to make use of, to bring about his own designs: and therefore they are compared to axes, and saws, and staves: Is. x. 15, *Shall the axe boast itself against him, that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him, that shaketh it?* Yea, in verse 5, God is said to take up a great king and a great nation, only as a rod to chastise his people with: *O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.* And, as a staff, a rod, or an axe cannot move themselves without the hand and guidance of him that makes use of them: so neither can the mightiest princes nor the most powerful people move themselves, but by the power and direction of God, who applies them, as so many tools or instruments, to whatsoever work he pleaseth.

Now, upon all these accounts, power may be thus eminently ascribed unto God: *Thine is the Power.*

4. Yet, when we affirm God's Power to be thus Sovereign and Infinite, *it doth not therefore follow, that it must take all things whatsoever within its reach and extent;* for there are several things, which, as St. Austin speaks, lib. v. de Civitate Dei, cap. 10, God cannot do, because he is Omnipotent: *Quædam Deus non potest, quia est Omnipotens.*

(1.) God cannot do the things, that are contradictory.

He cannot will the same thing to be and not be, at the same time. That there should be a body without a quantity, or any other corporeal property belonging to it, as the Papists absurdly dream in their monstrous doctrine of Transubstantiation. For, when they have recourse to the Almighty Power of God, by which, they say that those things, which are naturally impossible, may be effected; as for the same body to be in ten thousand places at once; for the same body to have quantity, as it hath in heaven, and no quantity, as in the sacrament: we truly answer, that the power of God never reacheth to verify contradictions; and that is as great a contradiction, to affirm a body to be in more places than one at once, or to be and not to have quanity, especially to have it and not to have it, as it is to affirm that it is a body and no body.

(2.) God cannot do any thing, which may justly bring upon him the imputation of sin.

For sin is not from power, but from weakness: since all impiety consists of defect, and all defect is from impotence. And, therefore, the Apostle tells us, James i. 13, *God cannot be tempted with evil.* Holiness and purity is an essential attribute of the Divine Essence; and, therefore, God can as soon not be, as be the author of sin: for all sin must arise, either from weakness in the understanding, or perverseness in the will: but the Divine Understanding is infinitely clear, and therefore cannot be dazzled with the false shows and appearances of evil; and the Divine Will is infinitely holy, and conformed to the sovereign rule of his sapience and wisdom. And, therefore, where there is no possibility of ignorance in the one, nor of irregularity in the other, there can be no obliquity in those actions, which proceed from both; but they must all needs be most holy, just, and righteous.

(3.) God cannot do any thing that argues him mutable and unconstant.

He cannot change his purposes, not break his promises, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips. And, though the Scripture makes frequent mention of God's repenting himself of what he hath done: so we read, Gen. vi. 6, *It repented the Lord, that he had made man:* Exod. xxxii. 14, *The Lord repented of the evil, which he thought to do unto his people:* 2 Sam. xxiv. 16, And *the Lord repented him of the evil.* Yet these, and such like expressions, are spoken only by way of accommodation to our capacities, and spoken συμπαθως και ανθρωπινως, "compassionately and after the manner of men;" but must be understood θεοπρεπως, after such a manner "as is befitting

God." For as men, when they repent of what they have made, do again destroy it, and act contrary to their former actings; so, because God doth sometimes act contrary to his former actings, he is said to repent of what he had done: although, in strict propriety of speech, the immutability of his essence is such, that all his purposes and counsels stand firm and fixed for ever: Mal. iii. 6, *I am the Lord: I change not:* James i. 17, With him *is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* And, therefore, because of this eternal fixedness of God's purpose, it is said, that *he cannot deny himself:* 2 Tim. ii. 13; that he *cannot lie:* Tit. i. 2; and that it is impossible that God should lie: Heb. vi. 18; because these things imply inconstancy and fickleness, which is always an effect of weakness; for, whensoever we alter our counsels and resolutions, it is because we see some inconvenience would follow upon them, which we did not before consider, which to impute to God were the highest blasphemy.

Now, these three things only excepted, all other things in the world fall within the compass of God's power. He is able to do all things, as Origen speaks excellently, the doing whereof would not deny him to be God, or to be holy, or to be wise. And, therefore, he cannot bring to pass contradictions, nor can he alter his eternal purposes; for this would derogate from his infinite wisdom. He cannot be the author of sin; for this would be a stain and blot upon his infinite purity and holiness; and both would be impotency rather than power. And, were he weak enough to do those things, he would not be God; for it is essential to God, to be infinitely wise and infinitely holy.

5. Let us now briefly show *how this consideration of the power of God may be made use of as a prevalent argument for the strengthening of our faith in prayer, and the assuring of us that we shall obtain what we ask:* for our Saviour hath taught us to subjoin it to all our petitions, as a reason why we should ask, and as a motive why we should speed: *For thine is the power.*

Now the great strength of this lies here, in that it must needs be a mighty encouragement to our faith, to reflect and consider, that, whatsoever we ask, we ask it of a God that is able to give it us: he is not a weak, impotent deity; but a God, who hath all power in his hands, and therefore can effect whatsoever we desire of him.

Behold what care God hath taken to strengthen our faith when we pray unto him. There are but two things, that can make us doubt of speeding in our requests: the one is whether God will, the other is, whether he can, grant us what we ask. And, that our faith might not boggle at either of these, our Saviour hath, as it were,

hedged in and enclosed all our prayers with these two great fences for our faith, God's willingness and his power to help: the Preface to this excellent prayer contains the one; and the Conclusion of this prayer the other. He is our Father; and, therefore, if earthly parents, whose bowels of mercy are but finite, are yet so tender over their children, and ready to do their utmost to contribute what assistance they can towards them; much more will our Heavenly Father, whose mercies and compassions are infinite and boundless. But, lest our faith should yet stagger and suspect the power and ability of God to relieve and help us, the Conclusion of this prayer puts in a caution against all unbelieving scruples in this case: *Thine is the Power.* So that we have abundant security for our faith, in whatsoever we desire of God; because he hath declared himself both willing and able to supply our wants, and satisfy our desires. Indeed, the power of God, alone, is not a sufficient plea; for we have before seen, that God is able to effect infinitely more than he will: but then the power of God is a strong and forcible plea, when it is joined with his will. And when we are once assured by the promises of his word, that God is willing to bestow upon us the blessings that we ask; then to bend the force of this plea towards him, that he is likewise able, will most certainly prevail. And that prayer, that is directed in faith, and winged with both these motives, shall never return into our bosoms in vain and ineffectual.

Thus have I finished the Two First Attributes of God made use of by our Saviour in this prayer, his Sovereignty and his Omnipotency.

iii. It remains, now, that we speak something to the Third Attribute of God, which our Lord here teacheth us to make use of in praying to him: and that is the GLORY of God: *For thine is the Glory.*

But this is an attribute so bright and dazzling, so surrounded and fringed about with rays of inaccessible light, that the Holy Angels themselves cannot stedfastly behold it; but twinkle and glimmer, yea, vail their faces, at the full beams of that object, the vision of which is yet their eternal joy and happiness. And, therefore, whatsoever weak or vile man can either speak or conceive of the Infinite Glory of the Great God, will, instead of exalting, debase it; and we shall but defame, while we attempt to celebrate it: so infinitely do the perfections of the Deity surmount our most raised affections, that our very praises thereof are but lessening of it; and whatsoever we ascribe unto God, is but detracting from him. Think with yourselves a little, if two blind men, that never saw the sun, were discoursing together about it, what strange, uncouth, and improper fancies would they form of its light and splendor! Surely, such,

yea vastly more confused and disproportioned, are all our notions and conceptions of the Glory of God: which is a light, that is invisible; obscurity, that is dazzling; and whatsoever else is most inconceivable to human capacities. For the Scripture, sometimes, describes God's dwelling-place to be in that light, unto which no mortal eye can approach; and, sometimes, that his pavilion is dark clouds, which no eye can penetrate: and both to signify, how impossible a thing it is, to search out God, and to find out the Almighty to perfection.

Yet, since he hath been graciously pleased to give us some refracted and allayed rays of himself, such as we are able to bear; both in the works of creation and providence, and likewise in his holy word; let us, with all humble modesty, take notice of those discoveries, which he hath made of his glory: wherein we shall find enough, if not to satisfy our curiosity, yet to excite our veneration; and, by seeing some glimpses of his *back-parts*, which he causes to pass before us, our desires will be made more earnest after that estate of consummate happiness, where we shall for ever behold his face, where we shall no longer see him *darkly through a glass*, but shall *see him as he is*, and *know* him *as we are known* by him.

1. Glory, therefore, according to the true and genuine import of the word, signifies any excellency or perfection in a subject, that either is or deserves to be accompanied with fame and renown.

And, hence, we may well *distinguish a twofold glory in God; the one Essential, the other Declarative.*

The Essential Glory of God is the collection and system of those Attributes, which eternally and immutably belong unto the Divine Nature.

The Declarative Glory of God is the manifestation of those his Attributes, so that his creatures may take notice of them with praise and veneration.

Both are here intended by our Saviour, when he teacheth us to ascribe the Glory unto God.

(1) God is Essentially Glorious, in all those Attributes, which appertain unto his Infinite Being: for each of them is infinitely perfect in itself; and the complexion and concentering of them altogether, make up a glory infinitely great and incomprehensible.

Thus, his Holiness is glorious: Exod. xv. 11, *Glorious in holiness.* His Power is glorious: 2 Thess. i. 9, They *shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power:* Col. i. 11, *Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power.* His Majesty is glorious: Ps. cxlv. 5, *I will speak*

of the glorious honour of his *Majesty.* His Kingdom is glorious: Ps. cxlv. 11, *They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom.* His grace and Mercy is glorious: Eph. i. 6, *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* And, from all these, results the Glory of his great and terrible Name, which hath in it an excessive brightness and lustre from the constellation of so many Glories united in it: Deut. xxviii. 58, *That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful Name,* THE LORD THY GOD. Yea, so infinite is this Essential Glory of God, that it diffuseth and sheddeth abroad its light and glory upon those things, which have but relation to him: therefore the Church is said to be glorious, because made in some faint resemblance like unto God: Ps. xlv. 13, *The King's daughter is all glorious within:* Eph. v. 27, *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle.* The Gospel is therefore glorious, because it is that glass, wherein we see the glory of God by a reflected light: and, as the beams of the sun falling upon a glass, make it shine with an exceeding brightness; so the Glory of God, striking upon the Gospel, and from thence rebounding off to us, hath stamped it with an excellent glory and lustre: 1 Tim. i. 11, *According to the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God.* His Throne is glorious: Jer. xvii. 12, *A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our Sanctuary.* Yea, not only his throne, but that which might seem more despicable, his very Footstool is glorious: Is. lx. 13, *I will make the place of my feet glorious.*

Now this Essential Glory of God is both Immutable and Incomprehensible.

(1) The Essential Glory of God is Immutable: the same, for ever: no addition can be made unto it, nor no diminution from it.

For, before there were ever any creatures extant, God was the same glorious being that now he is. Our praises and acknowledgments can no more contribute to this glory, than the eye that sees the sun can increase the light of it: for God's Attributes, that are his glory, are no adventitious accidental things, that may be assumed or laid aside at pleasure, but they are all as necessary as his nature is: and, therefore, though he be said to *clothe* himself *with light* and glory, *as with a garment;* yet it is a garment, that cannot be put on or off: but whatsoever God is in any one moment of eternity, the same he is from all eternity unto all eternity. He is *the Lord, who changeth not;* and with whom *there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

Indeed, there are some Titles in God's style, which seem not to have been always appertaining to him; and, in respect of his eternal

being, may appear as new stars in the heavens, and argue some alteration and change in his glory: as, to be Creator, the Lord and Governor of this World; which he was not from all eternity, nor could be till the creatures were formed.

But, here, we must carefully distinguish between the Absolute and Relative Attributes of God.

His Absolute Titles and Attributes are such as belong unto him simply, without depending upon any respect or reference to any thing without and besides himself: and so he is Infinite, Eternal, Wise, Holy, and Merciful in himself; and was so for ever, before there were any created objects, unto which or upon which he might manifest these his attributes.

But, now, the Relative Titles of God have a time wherein they began, and wherein they shall likewise cease: as, to be a Creator and Preserver of the World, as it now stands: wherein, though there may be daily mutations, yet God is the same, immutable; because these are only extrinsical denominations, and arise merely from that change that is made upon the creature, not from any change that is made in God. For, still, his Power is the same, whether he exert it in creating or no: his Wisdom is invariably the same, before he manifested it in the government of the world as since: and, in all the mutations that he brings upon the world, he is still the same Immutable and Unchangeable God. Only, as those, who sail, think the shore removes, when it is but the ship: so are we subject to the same mistakes, and are apt to think God is changed, when only ourselves are changed; that he moves from not being a Creator to be a Creator, when, in truth, we only move from not being creatures to be creatures. And, therefore, when we say God is now a Creator which once he was not, it implieth no more change in God, than it would in any object which now is seen, which before was not seen: and this is only a different external denomination, that makes no real change in the thing.

But, it may be, these speculations are too abstruse; and, therefore, I shall not detain you longer in them.

[2.] As the Essential Glory of God is immutable, so is it also Incomprehensible; for it is infinite, and the entire perfection of the Deity.

It is the very face of God: and therefore, Exod. xxxiii. 18, when Moses desired God to show him his glory, God answers him in the 20th verse, *Thou canst not see my face: for there* can *no man see* my face *and live.* And, although the angels in heaven and the spirits of just men made perfect, have brighter and more radiant discoveries

made unto them of the glory of God. than any that we can bear; yet neither they nor any other creature can possibly comprehend the full latitude and utmost extent of that glory, any more than it is possible for a finite thing to contain what is infinite. And, hence it follows, that, when the Scripture promiseth us, as one great part of our reward, that we *shall see* God *as he is:* 1 John iii. 2; we must not understand it, as if ever we could arrive to such a capacity as to see and know God as he is in his Infinite Essence: for God's Essence being altogether indivisible, to know God essentially, were to know him comprehensively; to know him, as much as he is to be known in himself, that is, to know him as much as he knows himself; which is impossible: for no finite understanding can comprehend an infinite object. And, yet, our sight and knowledge of God shall so far surmount those dim and glimmering discoveries which here he makes of himself to us, that, comparatively, the Apostle might well call it, a seeing him as he is, and a knowing him as we are known by him.

And, thus much, for the Essential Glory of God; which is himself, and his own infinite and eternal excellencies and perfections. But, besides this,

(2) There is another glory of God; and that is, his Declarative Glory: which is nothing else but that visible splendor and lustre, that reflects from his Essential Glory, upon the notice and admiration of his creatures.

So that there is a very great difference, between God's being glorious and being glorified.

God is always equally glorious in himself: so he was before the foundations of the world were laid; before ever there were any creatures to celebrate his praise.

But he is glorified, by his creatures' declaring and setting forth the infinite excellencies that are in his essence. We cannot set any new gems in his diadem, which did not shine there before; but, when we observe and admire those several coruscations of his attributes, which appear in those various methods that God takes to manifest them, then are we said to give glory unto God. His Holiness is always the same: but, when we endeavour to imitate it, then we glorify it: his Power is always the same; but we glorify it, when we depend upon it: his Mercy and Goodness is always the same; but we are said to glorify it, when we praise and extol it. And, therefore, God tells us, Ps. 1. 23, *Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.* We can add nothing to God, by all the glory that we ascribe unto him; but then we are said to give him glory, when we

admire, and adore, and celebrate those glories, that are in him. And so, John xii. 28. Christ prays, *Father, glorify thy name;* that is, make thine Essential Glory, the glory and brightness of thine Attributes, conspicuous to the world: to which request there was an answer returned from heaven, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again;* that is, as I suppose the words may well be interpreted, "I have already glorified my Mercy, which is my Name, in thy Incarnation and Mission; and I will also glorify my Justice, in thy Passion and Crucifixion: by the one, declaring how gracious I am, in providing a Saviour for the ruined world; by the other, how just and holy I am, in exacting a full and complete satisfaction for the sins and transgressions of the world."

Now we may both add unto, and diminish from, this Declarative Glory of God. We rob God of his glory, when we interpose between his attributes and the manifestation of them unto others. We hereby wrong and injure his repute and esteem in the world; and, although we cannot pluck off any of his attributes from him; for *if thou sinnest, what doest thou against* God? Job xxxv. 6: yet we obstruct the shining of them upon others. As, in an eclipse of the sun, the moon doth not darken the sun, but only darkens us; and hinders the light, which still is the same in itself, from breaking out upon the lower world. So, wicked men, by their sins, though they cannot deprive God of *the brightness of his glory:* yet they impede the examination and out-flowings of his glory, and hinder others from admiring and adoring of it as they ought.

Now the ways, whereby God useth to express and declare his glory, are various.

[1] He doth it by his Works.

Psalm xix. 1, *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork:* for they manifest to the world, the attributes and perfections of their great Creator; even his wisdom, power, and goodness. Some of God's works are his Footsteps, and some are his Images. The Image of God is seen in rational and intellectual creatures: and, by considering the wisdom understanding, and mental faculties that God hath endowed them with, we may come to apprehend some faint shadows and resemblances of the Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge of the Original Cause of them; since, whatsoever is in them must needs be, in a far more eminent degree, in the author and maker of them. But all God's works carry *quædam vestigia Dei,* "some prints and footsteps of God" stamped upon them; whereby, although they do not all show his likeness, yet they show his power and wisdom in framing them: Rom. i. 20,

The invisible things of God *from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead:* but he especially glorifies himself in the extraordinary miraculous works of his hands, whether in a way of mercy or in a way of judgment; Exod. xv. 11, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?* Ps. lxxxv. 9, *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land:* that is, God, by his wonderful deliverances of his Church and People, establisheth his Glory to dwell among them.

[2] God declares his exceeding and infinite glory by his Word. For, therein, he hath given us the most clear and lively representations of himself. And those attributes, which his works could never have discovered to us, he hath manifested by his Revealed Will. This is that table, on which he hath drawn his most resembling image. This is that glass, wherein *We, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory:* 2 Cor. iii. 18. And it consists of two parts, the Law and the Gospel: the one discovers to us the glory of God's justice; the other, the glory of his Mercy; and both of them are glories: 2 Cor. iii. 9, *For if the ministration of condemnation,* which is the Law, *be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness,* which is the Gospel, *exceed in glory.*

[3] The most clear manifestation of the glory of God was made in Christ, who was *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person:* Heb. i. 3.

In him, heaven was brought down to earth; the infinite comprehended; the invisible made conspicuous; and all the miracles, both of grace and glory, reconciled to our very senses. In him, all the Attributes of the Divine Nature are so interwoven with the Infirmities of the Human, that, if I may so speak, God in him studied to exhibit to us a person like ourselves, to give us some advantage for our apprehensions to conceive of his infinite perfections. In him, Omnipotence became weak; Eternity, mortal; Innocence itself, guilty; God, man; the Creator, a creature; the Maker of All, its own workmanship: life itself, in him underwent the sentence of death: and all these strange and impossible truths, as for other ends; so for this, that we might have some clearer hints and discoveries of the infinite glories of God, which in their full brightness would only dazzle and confound us, and were discernible by us only thus tempered and obscured. And, therefore, the Apostle calls him *God, manifest in the flesh:* 1 Tim. iii. 16. Certainly, God in flesh must needs be rather veiled and hidden, than manifested. But, although to himself he was obscured, yet to us he was manifested; because, if the

glory of the Deity had not been thus clouded and allayed, it had not been manifested. For that light, which when tempered makes us see, will strike us blind when too glorious: as we may safer direct our eyes towards the sun when it is under an eclipse, than when it shines with unchecked rays. Hence St. John, speaking of Christ in the mean estate of his humiliation, saith of him, John i. 14, *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Thus, now, you have seen what the Essential and Declarative Glories of God are.

2. Let us now consider *why this attribute should so eminently be ascribed unto God: Thine is the Glory.*

Now there may be Three reasons given of it.

(1) Because all, that is excellent and glorious in the creatures, is to be found in God; and that, either formally or eminently.

Is grace or holiness, wisdom or strength, duration, justice, or mercy, any excellency in those creatures to which they are attributed? they are all in God, formally, and infinitely more glorious, and with infinite more perfections, than they are in the creatures: for created beings have but their limited and stinted proportions of these qualifications; but God is infinitely holy, infinitely wise, infinitely just and infinitely merciful. These things are in him without alloys or mixtures from their contraries. He is Holy, without any mixture of sin: Wise, without any mixture of folly: Just, without any mixture of iniquity: Merciful, without mixture of cruelty. Yea, these are all in him, without any bounds set them by his nature and capacity; for they are his nature, and therefore as infinite and as unbounded as it. Again, those excellencies, that are in the creatures and cannot formally agree with the Divine Essence, yet they are all in him, eminently. Are any creatures excellent for the beauty and symmetry of their parts, for light, for motion or such like qualities, that do not belong unto the Divine Nature? Yet all these are eminently in God: for he is the prime and original cause, from whom they derive their being and perfection: so that all glory is his; his incommunicatively from any other, communicative from him.

(2) All glory, in respect of God, is but darkness and obscurity.

And so it was both a true and divine conception of Plato, when he said, That light was but a shadow of God: for, as shadows are vastly dark, when the light that surrounds them appears; so God is infinitely brighter than light itself. Yea, the sun, that created fountain of light, is but a black coal compared with this Eternal

Father of Lights. This is well expressed by Job: xxv. 5, *Behold, even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.* As the light of the sun, when it ariseth, drowns and extinguisheth all other lights; for its brightness, as it brings a day to all the rest of the world, so it brings a night to the stars: so the infinite brightness of the glory of God overcasts all other glory whatsoever, with night and obscurity. Hence it is said, that God *charged his angels with folly:* Job iv. 18; so that if those wise and intellectual creatures be compared with God, they are but foolish and ignorant; for the glory of his infinite and unsearchable understanding so far transcends their reach, that they know nothing, in comparison with him, who knoweth all things, The two chiefest glories of men are wisdom and strength; wisdom to contrive, and power to execute: these perfect him, as he is a man. But yet see how the Apostle undervalues both these, when compared with God: 1 Cor. i. 25, *The foolishnes of God is wiser than men: and the weakness of God is stronger than men.* And, therefore, because God's glory is infinitely surpassing all others, our Saviour ascribes it to him peculiarly: *Thine is the glory.*

(3) Because all other glories in the creatures serve only to illustrate the glory of the Great God.

Seest thou any excellency and perfection in any of the creatures? God hath so endowed them with it, not that thou shouldest fix there, and make that thy idol: but that thou mightest have a hint from thence, how much more perfect he himself is; and take thy rise from visible excellencies, to admire those that are invisible. Is there so much beauty and harmony in the frame of nature? Think, then, how much more harmonious and orderly are the counsels and designs of the great God, who hath contrived and disposed the whole course and circuit of Second Causes. Is there so much awe and dread in the presence of an earthly majesty, to daunt all that are not impudent and profligate offenders? Think, then, how infinitely venerable is the face of the Great God; since it is only some ray of his authority and majesty shining in them, that makes them so dreadful. Is it such a pleasant thing to the eye to behold the light? Raise, then, not thine eye of sense, but thine eye of faith, to consider how infinitely bright and glorious that light is, that is never clouded; that light which, though it infinitely diffuse itself, yet resides always in its centre: For *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all:* 1 John i. 5. Thus you see that God hath therefore made any created being glorious and excellent, that it might serve as a monitor to put us in mind of his greater glory; and, the more excellent any

perfections are in the creature, the greater advantage have we from them to raise our meditations unto God.

3. And, having thus shown you why glory is in such an especial manner attributed unto God, *Thine is the glory;* it remains now to consider, *what force this plea hath to confirm our faith, that we shall obtain from God those things which we pray for.*

And, here, let us see its influence upon every petition.

(1) The Glory is God's: therefore his Name shall be Hallowed.

For his declarative power consists in the hallowing of his name: since, to hallow, is nothing else, as I showed you in the explication of that petition, but to declare God to be holy; and this is to give glory unto God. Hence we have them both joined together: Lev. x. 3, *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me; and before all the people I will be glorified.* To sanctify, is to glorify God: and, therefore, what better argument can we urge that God would provide for the sanctifying of his Name, than this, that the glory is his; and if his Name be profaned in the world, his glory needs must suffer? How can the world know that God is infinitely glorious in all his perfections and attributes, unless he take care by his own methods to have his name sanctified among his people in their expressions and actions, and to have it sanctified upon the wicked in their plagues and punishments? Therefore we may well pray in faith, *Hallowed be thy Name, for thine is the Glory.*

(2) The Glory is God's: therefore his Kingdom shall come.

For where should he be honoured, but in his own kingdom? God is greatly dishonoured, and his glory traduced, in the rest of the world: and, therefore, if he will have any glory secured and maintained, he must take care of his Church to maintain and propagate it: Ps. lxxvi. 1. In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel. The glory of a king falls together with his kingdom; and it lays a blot upon his honour, if he should suffer his enemies to overthrow it, while he hath power to defeat their enterprises; since, therefore, the glory is God's, we may be confident that he will provide for the security and welfare of his own kingdom; and will, for his honour's sake, establish so sure, that the gates of hell, all the power and policy of men and devils, shall never be able to prevail upon it, to its extirpation. Hence, then, whensoever we see the rage of the professed enemies of the Name of Christ encroaching upon the borders of his dominions, when the state of the Church Militant seems visibly to impair, or when the hyprocrisy and wickedness of those who are the professed enemies of Christ seems to eat out the very heart and power of true godliness, we may well

pray in faith, *Thy kingdom come:* Lord, raise, Lord, enlarge, Lord, establish it; *for thine is the Glory:* and, unless thou wilt confine thy glory only to heaven, and account the praises and eternal hallelujahs of saints and angels a sufficient adoration for thy great Name, Lord, have regard to this thy poor decaying kingdom, for, only in it and in heaven, is thy glory celebrated. And, if thou leavest this thy kingdom to be overrun by the agents and ministers of the Devil, if profaneness and idolatry gain ground in it so as to thrust thee out of the throne, what were this, but to give thy glory to another, which thou hast promised not to do?

(3) The Glory is God's: therefore his Will shall be done in Earth as it is in Heaven

The greatest glory, that God can receive from us, is by our obedience: John xv. 8, *Herein,* saith our Saviour, *is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* God's chiefest glory is his holiness; and therefore he is styled, *glorious in holiness:* and we have no better way to glorify the holiness of God, than by endeavouring to be holy as he is holy; for then do we declare it to be a thing which we value as most excellent and glorious, when we strive to imitate it, and would fain get as much of it as our frail natures can receive. And, therefore, we may well pray in faith, *Thy Will be done for thine is the Glory;* because the greatest glory we can give to God, is by doing his will.

(4) The Glory is God's; and therefore will he provide for us our Daily Bread, and all things that are necessary for our good.

And, therefore, when God was miraculously to provide bread for his people in the wilderness, he tells them, Exod. xvi. 7, *In the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord.* And, certainly, it is not for the glory of God, that any of his should want things fitting and necessary for them. Only let us leave it to him, to judge what is so. For, although he should reduce thee to a morsel of bread, and a cup of cold water: yet he gives thee all that is fit for thee; and should he give thee more, it would not be a boon, but a curse.

(5) The Glory is God's: therefore he will Forgive thy Debts and Trespasses.

The Wise Man hath told us, Prov. xix. 11, that it is to the glory of a man *to pass over a transgression:* and shall it not much more be the glory of God, whose mercies are infinitely more glorious than our charity can be? Yea, he tells us, Prov. xxv. 2, that *it is the glory of God to conceal a thing;* that is, to hide and cover our sins, so that they shall not be found against us: and expressly, Eph. i. 6, 7, that *we have redemption,* even *the forgiveness of sins, to the praise* and

glory of his grace. And I have showed you, in opening of the petition, that it is a very high honour and superiority to forgive: it is the prerogative-royal of a King: and, therefore, we may well pray with faith, *Forgive us our Trespasses, for thine is the Glory.*

(6) The Glory is God's: therefore he will deliver us from the assaults and incursions of our enemies; he will deliver us from temptations, or from the evil of temptation.

He *will not suffer* us *to be tempted above* what we *are able* to bear; *but will, with* every *temptation, make a way* for us *to escape,* hereby to demonstrate the glory of his wisdom and power, that it is above all the wiles and power of the Devil and our spiritual enemies. And, therefore, we may well pray, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the Glory;* because it is the honour of God, to defend his servants from the incursions of his and their enemies.

Thus we have treated on three of God's Attributes ascribed to him in this Doxology: his Dominion, his Power, and his Glory.

iv. It remains now to consider the amplification of all these by that expression, FOR EVER: which is to be referred and accommodated to the foregoing titles, *The Kingdom is thine, for ever: the Power is thine, for ever:* and *the Glory, thine, for ever.*

Now this application of it denotes to us the eternity of God's attributes, and consequently his nature.

Indeed this particle *for ever,* doth not always in Scripture signify a strict and proper eternity; for it is often applied to things of various durations.

First. Sometimes, most improperly, those things, which have both beginning and end, are said to be for ever.

So the Mosaical Pædagogy, and those rights and observances which were imposed upon the Jews by the Levitical Law, are said to be everlasting; although they were not to continue any longer than between Moses and Christ, which space was not completely fifteen hundred years: thus the Priesthood is said to be eternal: Num. xxv. 13, where it is called, *The covenant of an everlasting priesthood:* so the sprinkling of the blood of the passover is to be commanded to be observed *for ever:* Exod. xii. 24; so Circumcision is called, *an everlasting covenant:* Gen. xvii. 13; and many more such instances might be given. Yea, things of a far shorter duration than these, such as are only to continue during life, are yet said to be eternal: the servitude of him, that refuseth freedom, was to be *for ever:* Exod xxi. 6; that is, during his natural life: and so the Psalmist often resolves himself, and exhorts others to praise and magnify God *for ever.* And, indeed, it is very ordinary in Scrip-

ture, that those things are said to be *for ever*, which were not to alter their state for some continuance of time, nor to be disused till the date prefixed to them were expired.

Secondly. Some things, which had no beginning, but shall have an end, are yet said to be *for ever*.

And such, as they respect their objects, are the decrees or foreknowledge of God; which shall, in their due time, be fulfilled. Thus Eph. iii. 11, they are called, *the eternal purpose* of God; and yet they cease under the notions of decrees and prescience, when that, which was from all eternity decreed and foreknown takes its accomplishment.

Thirdly. Those things which had a beginning, but never shall have an end, are said to be *for ever*.

And such are the Angels; all of them created in the beginning of time, but their future continuance is without bound or period: and the Saints, after the Resurrection, are said to be made *equal to the angels*, because they shall not die: Luke xx. 36; and Christ is said to be *made a little lower than the angels*, in that he tasted of death: Heb. ii. 9. The good angels live in eternal beatitude: they *always behold the face* of God: Matt. xviii. 10. And the evil angels live in eternal torments and a never dying death: they are *reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness:* Jude, verse 6. And, thus, the souls of men are everlasting: for, being spiritual substances and free from all principles of decay and corruption, they shall for ever continue in that estate and condition, for which their actions in this life have prepared them. And not the soul alone, but the body also shall be eternally preserved in its being: *This mortal must put on immortality:* 1 Cor. xv. 53; and then *shall we ever be with the Lord:* 1 Thess. iv. 17. And yet all these had once their beginning, by the creating word of God: but are eternal, *à parte post*, and shall always retain those natures and beings.

Fourthly. That is most strictly and properly said to be eternal and *for ever*, which neither hath beginning nor end; whose prospect, both ways, is infinite and boundless.

And, thus, God only is *for ever;* and it is an incommunicable attribute of his divine essence to be so. But, because all the perfections and properties of God are God himself, therefore this everlastingness here in the Doxology ascribed to his Kingdom, his Power, and his Glory, are said to be *for ever*. Yet not only these, but whatsoever is in God, is absolutely eternal: his *Righteousness is an everlasting righteousness:* Ps. cxix. 142; his *Truth endureth for ever:* Ps. cxvii. 2; *his Mercy* is *for ever:* Ps. cxxxvi. 1; his mercy endureth

for ever; which is there made the burden of that most excellent song and the sweet close of every verse in it: his Love is for ever: Jer. xxix. 3, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*

Now, in treating of the attributes of God, I shall endeavour to show these three things.

1. What the true and proper notion of eternity is. 2. That God is eternal. 3. What encouragement our faith may have from this attribute of God's eternity, that those things, which we pray unto him for, shall be granted unto us.

1. Let us see *What Eternity is.* And here, though it be altogether impossible, exactly to describe what is boundless and infinite; yet, to help our weak and shallow conceptions, we may take this notion of it. Eternity is a duration, which hath neither beginning nor end, nor succession of parts: or, according to the common description of Boethius, *Est interminabilis vitæ tota simul et perfecta possessio:* "It is the complete possession of an endless life all at once."

So that it is distinguished from all other durations whatsoever:—

(1) In that other durations have had their beginnings: for all things were created either in time, or with time; but eternity was before all time, and shall be after it.

(2) In that all temporal durations are successive, measured by the motions of heavenly bodies, by years, days, and hours; but eternity is permanent: it is but one abiding instant, and hath no parts following one after another; and though it comprehends all time within its infinite circle, yet it doth not move along with time: for, as rivers are contained within their banks and flow along by them part after part, without any motion of the banks themselves; so time is contained within eternity, and flows along in it without any motion or succession of eternity itself.

This I confess is hard, if not altogether impossible, to be formed into an idea: yet conceiving reason will infallibly demonstrate that being, which neither hath beginning nor end, can have no succession in its duration: for wherever there is succession there must needs be a priority; and wherever there is a priority, there must needs be a beginning. And if eternity did consist and were made up of such parts as are equal and commensurate to our years and days, it must needs follow, that these parts themselves must be infinite: for if they be but finite, we shall come to a beginning, which is not to be granted in eternity: and if they be infinite, then in eternity there must be as many millions of years as of minutes, and consequently a minute would be equal to a million of years; yea, the least part of a minute would be equal to it, which is grossly absurd.

But I shall not detain you with these philosophical speculations. Only, when we say that God is from everlasting to everlasting, we ought not to conceive that there is any succession in his duration; that he grows older, or that he hath continued longer this day than he was yesterday. For though, when we speak of God, we are forced to use such expressions, and denote succession in his being, as that he was from everlasting, and that he shall be to everlasting; yet to say that God was, or that he shall be, is only allowable by reason of the penury of our conceptions: but, in strict propriety, these are derogatory to him; for God neither was nor shall be, but only is and enjoys his eternal essence immutably and unsuccessively. And, therefore, when Moses demanded his Name, that he might inform the Israelites who that God was that would take pity of their sufferings, he tells him, thou shalt say unto them, *I AM hath sent me unto you:* Exod. iii. 14. And this, indeed, is the best and fittest expression of his eternity and unchangeableness. Yea, and the Scripture hath given us one more high and lofty expression of it: Ps. xc. 4, *A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past.* What is yesterday to this day? but a mere nothing. So a thousand years, yea, all the thousand years, and all the time that ever the orbs of heaven shall spin out to the world, is all to God but as yesterday when it is past: he lives not by it, nor is his Being measured out by days or years; but it is a perpetual NOW, a standing moment, an indivisible and permanent instant without flux or vicissitude. Indeed, it is wholly inconsistent with eternity and an infinite duration, that there should be any thing past, or any thing to come in it: for what is already past cannot be infinite, because it is already ended; and what is to come cannot be eternal, because there was something going before it. And from hence it appears, that a duration which is eternal, must be without beginning, without end, and without any succession of parts.

2. Now that *God is thus eternal,* appears both from clear evidence of Scripture, and invincible demonstrations of Reason itself.

(1) The Scripture bears abundant witness to the truth of this attribute.

Ps. cii. 25, 26, 27, *The heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.* Ps. xc. 2, *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.* Is. xliii. 10, *Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.* 1 Tim. i. 17, *Now unto the King eternal,* and

immortal, the only wise God, be honour and glory. But I cannot stand to cite all the testimonies that might be alleged.

(2) The eternity of God may be demonstrated by clear and irrefragable Reason.

And that I shall give you, in these several gradations.

[2] It is absolutely necessary, that there be some First Cause of all things that are made, which is not itself made or produced by any.

For the series of causes is not infinite: otherwise no effect could be produced; since what is infinite cannot be passed through. And if all beings, that are, are caused by some pre-existent being, then there is not, nor ever was a being, before which there was not another: and so this gross absurdity will follow, That, before there was a being, there was a being, which is a contradiction. Therefore we must necessarily rest in some First Cause, from which all things have their origin, and is itself caused by no other.

[2] This First Cause of all is God.

For, whatsoever is the first cause of all things, must needs be Almighty, in that it produceth them; and all-wise, in that it governs and maintains them: and incomprehensible; for that being, which hath no cause, cannot be perfectly known, since a perfect and comprehensive knowledge of things is derived only from the knowledge of the causes of them. Now whatsoever is Almighty, All-wise, and Incomprehensible, is that God, whom we adore.

[3] God being the First Cause of all things, and not produced himself by any other pre-existent being, it is impossible that there should be any time wherein he was not.

For, that, which once was not, either shall never be, or must be made. And, therefore, it being wholly inconsistent with the notion of a first cause to be made or produced, it clearly follows, that we can never conceive a time wherein God was not.

Hence it appears that God is eternal, *à parte ante*, or from everlasting.

And that he is also eternal *à parte post*, or to everlasting, appears.

[4] Because, that, which hath no beginning of its duration, can have no end of it.

For the First Cause of all not depending upon any for the production of its being, can depend upon none for the continuation of it; and, therefore, of necessity, must exist to all eternity.

And thus you see how much reason alone can speak for the Eternity of God. The demonstrations, which I have now given you, are so clear and perspicuous, that would those atheistical spirits, who acknowledge no God but their reason, duly ponder the force

of them, they would, even by their deified reason, be enforced to acknowledge the Living and Eternal God, whom we adore.

Possibly, to some, these things may seem difficult: to others, they may seem needless; because we all readily acknowledge the eternity of God: but, certainly, if ever there were need to confirm the Doctrines and Articles of Faith by arguments drawn from the principles of reason, it is now, in these days of ours, wherein Atheism hath gotten ground and credit; and it is looked upon as a sign of a pregnant wit and mature and deep judgment, daringly to dispute against the being and attributes of God, and whatsoever is most sacred and venerable in religion.

But, certainly, if there be reason in any thing, there is reason to believe the existence and perfection of the Deity: not only from the oracles of the Scripture, which are enough to satisfy a Christian; but from the dictates also of natural light, and the evidence that reason brings in: which are so cogent and demonstrative, that he, that will notwithstanding be an Atheist, must also be irrational: and whosoever will say in his heart, *There is no God,* or that God is not eternal, or that God is not infinitely perfect, we may well say of him, as the Psalmist doth, that he is a fool: *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:* Ps. xiv. 1.

And thus I have showed unto you what Eternity is, in its proper notion; and have evinced, likewise, that God is, in the strictest sence, Eternal.

(3) And now, before I come to the Third thing propounded, let us here make some few Practical Reflections upon this Eternity of God.

[1] Glorify this inconceivable and glorious attribute. Extol and venerate it, with your highest thoughts and lowest prostrations; sending your adoring thoughts as far into the eternity of God, as possibly a human and finite understanding can dart them. For, though eternity be such a deep as can never be fathomed, since it hath no bottom: yet it is sweet and delightful, to lose ourselves and be swallowed up in this abyss of being. Those prospects are most pleasant to the eye, that have nothing to bound them; no limits to restrain the sight in its free range: so it is the most pleasant prospect to the mind, to contemplate such an object where there can be no boundaries set to our apprehensions; and where we can see no farther, not for want of object, but for want of sight.

[2] Is God eternal, from everlasting to everlasting? Let us leave then the care of all future events unto him; for he is the same unchangeable God: and, although we be but of yesterday, and may not be to-morrow, and when we die, then all our thoughts perish

with us; yet the Everlasting God can and will order all affairs for his glory, and carry on our purposes if they be conformable unto his. We, oftentimes, are anxious and solicitous about what may happen after our decease, either to the world, or to those we love best in it; but let us commit this care to God; he ever lives, and hath the same ever Infinite Power and Infinite Wisdom, to dispose of all events as it shall please him. Let us, therefore, cast these burdens upon him, who shall still survive, as a father for our children, as a husband to provide for our widows, as a king and governor to provide for our country, as the universal lord and monarch to provide for the affairs of the whole world, according to the all-wise maxims of his eternal counsels.

[3] Is God eternal? Why then should we not give unto him the same honour, respect, and service, that his Saints have done in former ages and generations? He is still the same God; his holiness, and his justice, and his sovereignty still the same. And, if the consideration of these his attributes had such a mighty influence upon the Saints of former times, to engage them to a strict and holy life, why should they not now have the like influence upon us? He is the Lord: he changeth not; and, therefore, as absolutely as he required obedience from them, so absolutely now doth he require it from us. But, the truth is, we live, as if God were grown old; as if his justice were now out of date, or his power decrepit: we live, as if there were decays in the Deity; yea, indeed, as if there were no God in the world, to take notice of and punish our sins. Certainly, that God, who once lived to denounce threatenings, still lives to execute them. He is the same holy, the same powerful, the same just God that ever he was. Why then should not we give him the same honour, and respect, and service? Why should we not love and fear him, as the Saints of old have done: since we have the same God, whom they worshipped; and a God, who requires from us the same duties and observances?

3. Let us now proceed to the Third and last thing propounded, which was to show you *what encouragement our faith may have from this attribute of God, Eternity, to expect the grant of those good things, which we pray for.* For our Saviour hath taught us to use this, as a plea with God in our prayers. *For thine is the kingdom, &c., for ever.*

And, indeed, this encouragement is great and manifold. For hence we may, with confidence, rely upon God, for merciful supplies in all our wants, for deliverance in all our dangers, for supports under all our troubles, and for comfort under all our sorrows, because he is eternal; and therefore the same God, who hath, heretofore in all ages of the world, done great things for all those who trust in him

And therefore the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, which were a forcible plea with God in former times, a plea to which he could deny nothing when urged in faith, have still the same efficacy and validity now: for these, and all other of God's attributes, are his for ever.

Therefore, O Christian, now lay hold on God's strength; and plead with him what he hath done for his children in former ages: how he hath forgiven the penitent, revived the contrite, restored joy and salvation to dejected and despondent spirits: how he hath wrought for the sanctification of his great Name: by what wonderful providences and wise methods he hath established and enlarged his kingdom: how he hath strengthened the weak hands and feeble knees; and made those, who were without might, able, by his grace, to perform the hardest duties in fulfilling his will and commandments: how he hath provided for all their necessities, rebuked the temptations of the Wicked One, and kept them in the world from the evil of the world. And then urge: Lord, thou art still the same God, eternal in thy essence, immutable in thy attributes: thy power, thy wisdom, and thy mercy are the same that ever they were, and therefore vouchsafe unto us the same favour.

This plea offers a holy violence to heaven; a violence, that is pleasing and acceptable unto God, which he will not, he cannot resist. If we endeavour to be of the same dispositions and affections with the Saints of old, we may be sure to obtain of God's hands the same mercy and salvation. See how Asaph instructs the Church, to make use of the memorials of God's former loving-kindnesses, and the great and wonderful works that he had wrought for their fathers: Ps. lxxviii. 4, 6, 7, We will shew *to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done:* that one generation may declare them to another; *that they might set their hope in God.*

And, therefore, the consideration of the eternity and unchangeableness of God is of vast and infinite comfort; and a mighty advantage for the strengthening our faith in pleading with God for the same mercies, which he hath formerly bestowed upon others, because he is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*

And thus I have finished the Doxology: and therein considered the four glorious attributes ascribed unto God in it; his Sovereignty, his Omnipotence, his Excellency, and his Eternity.

IV. There remains but one thing more to be spoken of in this Prayer, that is the CONCLUSION and RATIFICATION of all, in that short particle, *Amen.*

Of this I shall speak but very briefly, and so shut up this whole subject.

This word, *Amen*, is sometimes prefixed before a speech, and sometimes affixed after it.

First. When it is prefixed before, it is assertory: and so we find it very often in the Evangelists. For wheresoever our Saviour useth the word *Verily*, it is no other but *Amen*. *Verily, verily I say unto thee:* i. e. *Amen, amen, I say unto thee;* which is a vehement assertion of the truth and necessity of what he speaks. And our Saviour useth it to gain the more attention and belief to what he desires: thus, John iii. 5, *Amen, amen, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* So John xvi. 23, *Amen, amen, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you:* and so, in many other places in the Evangelists. How backward are we to believe, since our infidelity is such, that it constraineth the Son of God, who is truth itself, to use asseverations and protestations to win our assent unto him!

Secondly. As this particle, *Amen*, used in the beginning of a speech is assertory of the undoubted truth of it: so, when it is subjoined and used at the end of it, it is precatory; and signifies our earnest desire to have our prayers heard and our petitions granted: Ps. xli. 13, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, and amen.* Ps. lxxii. 19, *Let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and amen.* Ps. cvi. 48, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen.*

In the former sense of the words, as it is prefixed to a speech, it signifies *so it is:* in this latter, as it is added to a petition or request, it signifies *so be it.*

Now this teacheth us to put up all our petitions,

First. With understanding: duly weighing and considering what it is we ask of God. For when we use vain and insignificant babbling, how can we seal and close them up with a hearty Amen? And this condemns the mockery of the Papists; who, because God understands what is uttered in a language to them unknown, think that they may lawfully pray to him in a tongue which they themselves understand not. But, with what zeal, with what affection, can they close up such prayers with an Amen? This is like setting a seal to an instrument, which they know not what it contains; and is expressly condemned by the Apostle: 1 Cor. xiv. 16, *How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?*

Secondly. It teacheth us to present all our requests to the Throne

of Grace, with fervent zeal and affection. *Amen* is a wing to our prayers: it is the bow, that shoots them up to heaven. And, although every petition, as we utter them before God, should be accompanied with an earnest and hearty desire to have them heard and granted; yet, at the close of them all, we are to redouble and repeat this our desire in the word Amen. Wherein we do, as it were, briefly and succinctly pray over again all that we had prayed before; and, in one word, beg of God, that he would give us all that we had before asked of him.

And, therefore, whether we pray ourselves, or join in prayers with others and make their petitions ours, we ought to attest our understanding of, our assent unto, and our earnest desires after the mercies that are begged by sealing up the prayers with an Amen.

And, certainly, it would be a very beseeming thing, if Amens were audible and sounding: unless we are ashamed to be thought to pray, when others pray; and to make use of others' expressions, to present our petitions. When we come to the public worship, we are not to look upon the minister only as praying for the people; but he is the people's mouth unto God: and it is or ought to be the prayer of the whole congregation which he presents. They pray with him, and by him; and every petition, that he makes to God, ought to be ratified with an Amen sent from our very hearts: which if we sincerely and affectionately perform, we have abundant assurance, that what is confirmed by so many suffrages on earth, shall likewise be confirmed by our Father which is in heaven. And how beautiful, how becoming, would this be, when the whole Church shall thus conspire together in their requests! St. Jerome tells us, it was the custom in his days, to close up every prayer with such an unanimous consent, that their Amens rung and echoed in the Church; and sounded like the fall of waters, or the noise of thunder. This would be a testimony of our hearty consent to the things we pray for. And, if any two, that *shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask*, shall have it granted them, as our Saviour hath promised, Matt. xviii. 19, then, certainly, the joint prayers of a whole multitude of Christians must needs have a kind of Omnipotency in them, and be able to do any thing with God.

And thus I have, with God's assistance, given you a brief Exposition of this most Excellent Prayer of our Saviour. The Lord sanctify it unto you; and make it a means to help you to pray with more understanding, with stronger faith, and with greater fervency!

THE END OF THE LARGER EXPOSITION.

A CATECHISTICAL EXPOSITION

ON THE

LORD'S PRAYER,

BY WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER.

Quest. *Is the Lord's Prayer a Form of Prayer, or only a Pattern for Prayer?*

Answ. It is both. That it is to be used as a Form, appears, Luke xi. 2, *When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.* That it is a Pattern, Matt. vi. 9, *After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.*

Q. *What are the Parts of this prayer?*

A. They are Four,—1. The Preface, or Introduction. 2. The Petitions and Requests. 3. The Doxology, or praise-giving. 4. The Conclusion and Ratification.

Q. *What is the Preface to this prayer?*

A. "Our Father, which art in Heaven."

Q. *What observe you from it?*

A. That, in the beginning of our prayers, we ought seriously to consider and reverently to express the glorious attributes of God, as an excellent means to compose us unto a holy fear of his Divine Majesty.

Q. *How many are the Petitions contained in this prayer?*

A. Six: whereof the three first respect God's glory, and the three last our own good.

Q. *What learn you from this Order and Method?*

A. That we ought first to seek God's glory, before any interests and concerns of our own.

Q. *How are those petitions divided, which immediately concern the glory of God?*

A. In the first of them, we pray that God may be glorified; in the other two, for the means whereby he is glorified.

Q. *How divide you those petitions, which concern our own good?*

A. One relates to our temporal, the other two to our spiritual good.

Q. *What observe you, from placing the petition for our temporal good, in the midst of this prayer?*

A. That we are only to bait at the world, in our passage to heaven; and only refresh ourselves with our daily bread, in our way and journey thither.

Q. *What are the petitions, which relate to our spiritual good?*

A. They are two: one, whereby we beg the pardon of our sins; the other, whereby we beg deliverance from them.

Q. *What ascribe you to God in the Doxology?*

A. Four of his most glorious attributes,—1. His Sovereignty: *Thine is the Kingdom.* 2. His Omnipotence; *and the Power.* 3. His Excellency; *and the Glory.* 4. The Eternity and Unchangeableness of all these: they are thine *for ever.*

Q. *What signifies that particle,* "Amen," *at the end of this prayer?*

A. It signifies two things. *So be it:* which notes our desire for the obtaining of what we ask. *So it shall be:* which notes our assurance of being heard.

Q. *What is the* PREFACE *to the Lord's Prayer?*

A. "Our Father, which art in heaven."

Q. *What doth this teach us?*

A. That, in our entrance into prayer, we should seriously consider both the Mercy of God as he is our Father, and likewise his Majesty as he is in Heaven: that the one may beget in us filial boldness, and the other awful reverence; and, by the mixture of both, we may be kept from despair and presumption.

Q. *In what respects may God be styled Father?*

A. In three especially,—1. In respect to the Eternal Generation of his Son: and so this title is proper only to the First Person of the Trinity. 2. In respect of Creation and Providence: and so he is the Father of All: Mal. ii. 10, *Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?* 3. In respect of Regeneration and Adoption: and so he is the only Father of the Faithful: John i. 12, 13, *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* Rom. viii. 15, 16, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness, with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*

Q. *In what respects do we call God Father, in this prayer?*

A. In the two last: as he hath created us and doth preserve us and as he hath regenerated and adopted us.

Q. *When ye style God, The Father, do ye mean only God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity?*

A. No. For God, the First Person, is eminently called, The Father, not in respect of us, but in respect of Christ. In respect of us, the whole Trinity, both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is our

Father which is in Heaven: Isaiah ix 6, *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder. and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace:* John iii. 5, *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Q. *What is implied in this particle "Our,"* Our Father?

A. That God is the Father of all men. He is the Father of the wicked, by creation and providence; but especially of the godly, by regeneration and adoption.

Q. *Is it proper, in our secret prayers to say,* "Our Father?"

A. It is. For we so find: Dan. ix. 17, *Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.*

Q. *What learn we, by styling God, "our Father?"*

A. First, to esteem one another as brethren; since all partake of the same common nature; much more as we partake of the same especial grace: to interest one another in our prayers, and thereby maintain the Communion of Saints.

Q. *But, since God is every where present, why hath our Saviour taught us to direct our prayers to our Father in Heaven?*

A. Because heaven is the most glorious place of God's residence: and therefore God is represented to us in heaven, to affect us with his glory and majesty. 2. Because God no where hears our prayers with acceptation, but only in heaven: for there only are they represented by Christ's intercession, which he makes in both natures

Q. *What learn ye, from our being commanded to direct our prayers to God in Heaven?*

A. That we should so pray, as to pierce heaven; which cannot be done, by the strength and intention of our voice, but of our zeal and affection.

R. *Is the voice necessary in prayer?*

A. It is, only upon Three accounts,—1. As that, which God requires should be employed in his service. 2. When, in secret, it may be a help to raise our affections; still keeping it within the bounds of decency and secrecy. 3. In our joining with others, it is a help likewise, to raise and quicken their affections.

Q. *What is the* FIRST PETITION *of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. "Hallowed be thy Name."

Q. *What is here meant by the Name of God?*

A. 1. God's Name in himself: Ps. xx. 1, *The Lord hear thee in*

the day of trouble: the name of the God of Jacob defend thee: and many other places. 2. The Name of God is any perfection ascribed unto him, whereby he hath made himself known unto us.

Q. *What are the names of God?*

A. His Titles and his Attributes.

Q. *What are his Titles?*

A. They are many: as Jehovah, which signifies being, and giving being; Creator, denoting his infinite power; Lord and King, denoting his authority and dominion; Father, signifying his care and goodness towards his creatures; Redeemer, noting his mercy and grace, in delivering them from temporal evils, and especially from eternal death.

Q. *What are the Attributes of God?*

A. They are of two sorts, either incommunicable or communicable.

Q. *Which are his Incommunicable Attributes?*

A. Such as are so proper to the Divine Essence, that they cannot, in any measure or resemblance, be ascribed to the creatures: such are Eternity, Immensity, Simplicity, and Immutability.

Q. *What are his Communicable Attributes?*

A. They are such as may, in some analogy and resemblance, be found in the creatures: as Holiness, Justice, Mercy, Truth, Wisdom, and Power.

Q. *Since they are to be found in the creatures, how are they then the proper Names of God?*

A They are the proper Names of God, when they are applied to him free from all those imperfections, that attend them in the creatures.

Q. *What are these Imperfections?*

A. They are Three,—1. That all the perfections of the creatures, are not originally from themselves, but derivatively from God. 2. They are not infinite, but limited. 3. They are not unchangeable, but mutable.

Q. *How than do these become the Name of God?*

A. When we ascribe them unto God, as originally from himself, and infinitely and unchangeably in himself.

Q. *What is it to Hallow this name of God?*

A. It signifies to make his Name Holy.

Q. *How can God or his Name be made Holy?*

A. Neither by dedication to holy uses, nor by infusion of holy habits; both which are frequently in Scripture called hallowing or sanctifying: but only by declaration of his glory and holiness.

Q. *How do we hallow the Name of God by Declaration?*

A. When, in our most reverent thoughts, we observe and admire the expressions of his attributes, and endeavour to set them forth to others, both in words and actions.

Q. *What pray you for in this petition, "Hallowed be thy Name?"*

A. For three things in the general,—1. We beg such graces for ourselves, as may enable us to sanctify the Name of God.

Q. *What are they especially?*

A. Knowledge and understanding of his nature, will, and works: thankfulness for every mercy: patience under every affliction: faith in his word and promises; for, to believe God's Word gives glory to his Name: Rom. iv. 20, *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God:* a holy and exemplary life, whereby we especially glorify God, and induce others to do so too: Matt. v. 16, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven:* and, lastly, savoury and well ordered speech; that we may not profane the Name of God by oaths, or curses, or vain using it, but speak of him with all holy fear and reverence.

Q. *What else do we beg of God in this petition?*

A. 2. We beg that others also may receive grace, to enable them to sanctify his Name. And, 3d, we beg that God would so overrule all things, that his glory may be promoted by them.

Q. *What learn you from Christ's making this the first petition of his prayer?*

A. 1. That the glory of God is to be preferred by us, before all other things whatsoever: John xii. 27, 28, *Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* 2. That, in the beginning of our prayers, we ought to beg assistance from God, to present them, that his Name may be hallowed.

Q. *What is the* SECOND PETITION *of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. "Thy kingdom come."

Q. *How manifold is the Kingdom of God?*

A. It is twofold; either Universal, or else his Peculiar Kingdom.

Q. *What is God's Universal Kingdom?*

A. The whole world; both heaven and earth, and hell itself, and all things in them: Ps. ciii. 19, *The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*

Q. *How doth God exercise his dominion over this kingdom?*

A. By the power of his Providence; disposing of all his creatures and all their actions, according to his will.

Q. *But since wicked men are rebels against God, how doth he maintain his dominion over them?*

A. Three ways,—1. In that they cannot sin without his permission. 2. In that he restrains them when he pleaseth. 3. In that he justly punisheth them for their sins; sometimes in this life, always in the next.

Q. *What is God's Peculiar Kingdom?*

A. His Kingdom of Grace, which is the Church; and that, either militant here on earth, or else triumphant in heaven.

Q. *How is the Church Militant to be considered?*

A. As it is either Visible or Invisible.

Q. *What is the Visible Church of God here on earth?*

A. It is a company of people, openly professing the truths that are necessary to salvation, and celebrating the ordinances appointed by Jesus Christ.

Q. *What is the Universal Kingdom or Church of God?*

A. It is a company of true believers, who have internal and invisible communion with God, by his Spirit and their faith.

Q. *What observe you of both?*

A. Its mixture and imperfection: for in the Visible Church, there is a great mixture of persons, the bad with the good: in the Invisible, there is a great mixture in persons, of evil with good, and sin with grace.

Q. *You have formerly told us that the Church of Christ, in its progress is the Church Militant, either Visible or Invisible; and that the Church of Christ, in its consummation, is the Church Triumphant. What is this Church Triumphant?*

A. The general assembly of such glorious Angels, as never fell; and such glorified Saints, as are raised from their fall.

Q. *What is that kingdom, which in this petition we pray may come?*

A. Not the Universal Kingdom of God, which is the world; for his dominion therein is always the same: but only the Peculiar Kingdom, which is his Church; and more especially that part of it, which is militant on earth.

Q. *In what respects may God's kingdom be said to come?*

A. In three,—1. In respect of the means of grace and salvation; which are the Word and Sacraments: for where these are dispensed, there God's kingdom is erected. 2. In respect of the efficacy of this means in the conversion of sinners; whereby they are brought into the invisible kingdom of Christ. 3. In respect of the perfec-

tion of this kingdom: for then God's kingdom comes, when the saints' graces are increased; when their souls are received into heaven; and when both souls and bodies are consummated in glory.

Q. *What do we pray for, when we say, "Thy kingdom come?*

A. 1. That God would plant his Church where it is not: that all the kingdoms of the earth may become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ. 2. That his ordinances may be purely and powerfully administered; his word truly preached, which is the law of his kingdom; and his sacraments duly dispensed, which are the seals of it. 3. That God would send into his Church able and faithful Ministers, to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of the Gospel. 4. That the Ministry of the Word may be successful to the conversion of those that hear it. 5. That all the Churches of Christ may be kept from error, schism, superstition, and idolatry; and that true doctrine and due discipline may be continued in them, to the end of the world.

Q. *But may we not pray also for the Church Triumphant in heaven?*

A. We may, for the fulfilling of what is promised. 1. That the number of them may be completed. 2. That their persons may be completed. That the bodies of those saints, which now sleep in the dust, may be raised, united to their souls, and both made eternally glorious in the kingdom of heaven.

Q. *Is not this praying for the dead; so justly condemned of popish superstition?*

A. No: for we pray not for another state, as the Papists do, when they pray for souls to be delivered out of purgatory; but we pray for the perfection of the same state, in which the souls of the faithful already are: we pray not for their release out of torments, but for a joyful resurrection, which both they and we expect; and whatsoever may be the object of our faith and hope, may well be the subject of our prayers.

Q. *Which is the* THIRD PETITION?

A. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Q. *How is the will of God distinguished?*

A. Into the Will of his Purpose, or the Will of his Precept; or into his Secret and Revealed Will.

Q. *What is the Will of God's Purpose?*

A. His eternal counsels and decrees, whereby he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q. *What is the Will of God's Precept?*

A. His holy laws, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and

New Testament; wherein, he hath revealed to us the duties we ought to perform for the obtaining of eternal life.

Q. *How do these two wills differ?*

A. In that there are many things, which God wills by his Will of Purpose, that he hath not willed by his Will of Precept: for God commands nothing, but what is holy; yet he purposeth to permit many things, that are evil. 2. In that we may effectually resist his Will of Precept, so as to hinder the accomplishment of it, as we do whensoever we sin: but we cannot resist the Will of God's Purpose, though, many times, to endeavour it, is our indispensable duty.

Q. *Ought not the will of the Creature to be conformed to the will of God in all things?*

A. Yes, to the Will of his Precept; for that alone is the rule of our obedience: but in all things to conform to the Will of his Purpose may involve us in the greatest guilt: Acts ii. 23, *Being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*

Q. *Is there not then a manifest repugnance between God's Will of Purpose and Precept?*

A. No: for the object of God's Will of Purpose is event; but of his Will of Precept, duty; and it is no contradiction for God to will, or permit that to be, which he hath willed or commanded us not to do.

Q. *Which of these do we pray may be done?*

A. We especially and absolutely pray, that the Will of God's Precept may be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Q. *What considerations may excite us to be earnest in this request?*

A. 1. Because there is a great reluctancy in our corrupt nature against the holy will of God; therefore we ought earnestly to pray that he, by his grace, would subdue it. 2. Because the glory of God is deeply concerned in doing his will; for, by this, we own his sovereignty, and our subjection to his laws and kingdom. 3. Because our own interest is deeply concerned in it; for it is only by doing his will that we can inherit the promises: Rev. xxii. 14, *Blessed are they, that do his commandments.*

Q. *Ought we not absolutely to pray, that God's Will of Purpose may be done?*

A. No: and that, because many things are brought to pass by this will, which we ought to pray against; as temporal evils, and the permission of sin.

Q. *How then do the Saints in Scripture pray for the accomplishment of this will of God? as in* 1 *Sam.* iii. 18, "*And Samuel told him every*

whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good:" 2 *Sam* xv. 26, "*But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.*" Acts xxi. 14, "*And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.*" *And our Saviour, Luke* xxii. 42, "*Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.*"

A. These are not so much prayers, as declarations of their submission unto and patience under the hand of God.

Q. *May we not pray at all, that God's Will of Purpose may be done?*

A. Yes: if it is for temporal, or spiritual or eternal blessings on ourselves or others.

Q. *What force doth the particle* THY *carry in it, when we pray,* "thy will be done?"

A. It may be taken either emphatically or exclusively. 1. It signifies that God's will ought to be prefered above and before all others: Acts iv. 19, *But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye:* both because it is most sovereign, and because it is most holy and perfect; so that we act most like men, when we act most like Christians. 2. It signifies exclusively, that God's Will, and not our own, may be done: for ours being carnal and corrupt, we pray for the subduing of it to his.

Q. *What mean you by praying that God's Will be done in earth?*

A. 1. I pray that it may be done by myself, and by all others living on the earth: Psal. lxvii. 2. *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.* 2. We pray that we may improve the few days of this mortal life, in the service of God; for there is no device nor operation in the grave.

Q, *Having given this account of the petition, in the Matter of it, what is next observable?*

A. The Proportion of it: "as it is in heaven."

Q. *But is it not impossible to do the will of God in earth, as it is in heaven; where the holy angels do perfectly perform it?*

A. It is, as to the equality of perfection; but not, as to the similitude and proportion of our endeavours after it: for we are commanded to be *holy as God is holy,* and *perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect:* Matt. v. 48, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect:* which command we obey, when we seriously endeavour it.

Q. *How then is the will of God done in heaven?*

A. 1. Their obedience is absolutely perfect, both as to parts and

degrees; that is to say, they obey all God's will enjoined them, and that with all their might: and after this perfection we ought to strive, and in this petition to pray for a greater measure of it. 2. Their obedience is cheerful, not extorted by fears nor sufferings. 3. They do the will of God, with zeal and ardency: Ps. civ. 4, *Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire.* 4. They do it, with celerity and ready dispatch; and therefore the angels are often in Scripture described to have wings. 5. The will of God is done in heaven, with all possible prostration and reverence: Rev. iv. 10, *The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.* 6. The will of God is done in heaven, with constancy and perseverance: Rev. vii. 15, *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.* And thus we ought to pray and endeavour, that we may do the will of God on earth.

Q. *What learn you from this?*

A. That we ought not to satisfy ourselves in comparing our obedience with other men's; as the boasting Pharisee did: but to take the examples for our holiness from heaven; and to endeavour to imitate the purity of angels, and the God of Angels. For St. Paul himself, when he prescribes his life as an example for Christians, doth it only as he followed the pattern of Christ: 1 Cor. xi. 1, *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

Q. *We have already considered the Three First Petitions, which immediately relate to God's Glory: it remains now to treat of those which immediately concern our own good. Which is the* FIRST *of them?*

A. That, wherein we beg the good things of this present life, in these words, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Q. *What is here meant by Bread?*

A. All temporal and earthly blessings, that contribute, either to our being or well being: for bread being the most usual and useful support of life, it is often in Scripture put for all kind of provision necessary for natural life; Gen. iii. 19, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Q. *What learn we hence?*

A. That it is not below a spiritual Christian, to pray for temporal mercies: both because they are needful for us Matt. vi. 32, (*For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:*) *for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things:* and God hath promised

to bestow them; Philip iv. 19, *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Q. *How ought we to pray for them?*

A. Only conditionally, if it may consist with God's good pleasure to bestow them; otherwise, we do not pray, but invade: and if it may consist with our good to receive them; otherwise we ask a curse instead of a blessing.

Q. *What learn you from the word "give?"*

A. That God is the giver of every temporal mercy.

Q. *How is God said to give us our daily bread?*

A. 1. By producing it, and bringing it to us: for though the chain of natural causes be never so long, yet God holds the first link of it in his own hand: Hosea ii. 21, 22, *And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil: and they shall hear Jezreel.* 2. By blessing it to us without which our daily bread can never nourish us: Deut. viii. 3, *And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, (which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know) that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only: but by every word, that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live.*

Q. *What mean you, when you pray for daily bread?*

A. By this we pray, that God would bestow upon us daily, those mercies, which are sufficient for the day.

Q. *What learn you hence?*

A. That, as, in praying for bread, we pray for conveniencies: not for superfluities or delicacies: so, in our praying for daily bread, we pray for present supplies; not goods laid up for many years. Which teacheth us to moderate our cares and desires after earthly things, and to rest satisfied in God's providence and present blessings.

Q. *May we not then carefully provide for the time to come, and the support of our dependents?*

A. We may, and ought: but our care must be only prudent and provident; not perplexing and desponding.

Q. *Why is that expression, "this day," added?*

A. To show us that every day we stand in need of supplies from God; and, therefore, should daily pray to receive them.

Q. *Since we pray for daily bread, why is it called "our bread?"*

Q. To note, that we ought to use lawful means to acquire what we pray for.

Q. *What pray you for in this petition?*

A. 1. That God would give us the good things of this life, as the

acquisitions of our lawful endeavours. 2. That he would bless the increase of what is lawfully ours. 3. That he would bestow upon us a spiritual right, in whatsoever we enjoy, through, Jesus the *Heir of all Things.* 4. We pray, that we may not desire nor covet what is another's. 5. We pray for life itself, that it may be prolonged, whilst God hath any service for us to do in this world. 6. For all the means, that may lawfully preserve our life and health. 7. That he would strengthen our faith and dependence on his Providence, who is the giver of all good. 8. That he would give us contentment in that portion of earthly blessings which he allots us.

Q. *What is the* FIFTH PETITION *of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Q. *What things are observable in this petition?*

A. The Order and Matter of it.

Q. *What observe you from the Order of it?*

A. That, after we have prayed for our daily bread, we are taught to pray for pardon of sin. Which method is most rational:—1. Because the guilt of sin, many times, withholds from us those temporal comforts, which we stand in need of: Isaiah lix. 2, *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* 2. Because, without pardon of sin, our temporal enjoyments are but snares and curses.

Q. *What observe you in the Matter of this petition?*

A. Two things: the petition itself; "*Forgive us our debts:*" and the condition, or proportion, or plea, and argument for obtaining this forgiveness; "*As we forgive our debtors.*"

Q. *What mean you here by Debts?*

A. The same, which St. Luke, xi. 4, calls Sins, *And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

Q. *How stand we indebted to God?*

A. We stand indebted to God, both as we are his Creatures, and as we are Offenders: on the former account, we owe God the Debt of Obedience; on the latter, the Debt of suffering Punishment.

Q. *Which debt do we pray God to forgive?*

A. The latter only: for the former is irremissibly due to our great Creator.

Q. *How come we to be thus indebted unto God?*

A. By the sentence of the Law, which condemneth every transgressor of it, to undergo the penalty it threatens; which penalty is all manner of woes and curses, and everlasting death: Gal. iii. 10, *Cursed in every one that continueth not in all things which are written*

in the book of the law, to do them: Rom. vi. 23, *For the wages of sin is death:* Ezek. xviii. 4, *The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*

Q. *Since the suffering of these is the debt we owe to divine Justice, why say you that sin is that debt.*

A. Because sin alone is the meritorious cause of these; and we owe the suffering of them, only as we are sinners.

Q. *Are there no sins venial in their own nature, so as not to deserve eternal damnation?*

A. No; not the least: for the wages of every sin is death. All therefore are mortal in their own nature; and all are venial, through the mercy of God in the merits of Christ, excepting only the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Q. *Can we no way pay off these debts, so as to satisfy the justice of God?*

A. No: for neither can we do it by obedience, nor yet by sufferings. Not by the duties of obedience: for these are a debt we owe to God's holiness and sovereignty; and therefore cannot pay the debts we owe to his justice, and we cannot pay debts by debts. Not by suffering: for sin, being an infinite evil, must be punished with an infinite punishment; but we cannot suffer a punishment infinite in degrees, therefore it must be infinite in duration: so that the damned in hell shall never be able to say, it is finished.

Q. *How then may we hope to be acquitted of our numberless debts?*

A. Only through the free mercy and grace of God, pardoning them in Jesus Christ, and therefore, we pray, *Forgive us our debts.*

Q. *What is pardon, or forgiveness of sin?*

A. It is the removal of the guilt of sin.

Q. *What is the guilt of sin?*

A. The guilt of sin is either the intrinsical desert of punishment; or, else, an obnoxiousness and liableness to it, through God's designation of the sinner to undergo it.

Q. *Doth pardon of sin remove both these guilts?*

A. No, it removes not the former; for still the sins of those, who are pardoned, do, in themselves, deserve eternal death. But it removes the latter: viz., it takes away our appointment unto death: 2 Sam. xii. 13, *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die.*

Q. *How is it consistent with the justice of God, to pardon offenders without punishment?*

A. Though believers are not personally appointed to punishment, yet mystically they are: which punishment they have already suffered in Christ, their surety; with whom they are made one by faith.

Q. *To whom is this prayer for pardon of sin directed?*

A. To God only; whose royal prerogative it is, to forgive sins: Isa. xliii. 25, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins:* Mark ii. 7, *Who can forgive sins, but God only?*

Q. *Have not the ministers of the gospel power to forgive sins: according to that of St. John* xx. 23, "*Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted?*

A. They have a ministerial and declarative power, as officers, not an authoritative and judicial power, as sovereigns. As the prince only pardons, the herald proclaims it: so God alone, by the prerogative of his grace, grants pardon; the Minister, by his office, publisheth it to all that repent and believe.

Q. *What then must we judge of that absolute and plenary power, which the Pope assumes of pardoning sins?*

A. That it proves him to be Antichrist, in exalting himself above God: 2 Thess. ii. 4, *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God:* for whosoever can forgive wrongs done against another must be superior to him; and have authority to cause the person offended to surcease the prosecution, and sit down by the wrong done him.

Q. *If God only can forgive sins, how then are we bound to forgive those who trespass against us?*

A. We ought to forgive them, so far forth as they have wronged us: but we cannot forgive the wrong they have done to God in wronging us; but must leave them to his mercy, and their repentance.

Q. *Since it is God's prerogative and glory to pardon sins, what inferences may we collect from hence?*

A. 1. That our pardon is free and gratuitous; without respecting former deserts, or expecting future recompense. 2. That our pardon is full and complete: because it is an act of God within himself; whereas, what he works in us is, in this life, imperfect; nothing of guilt is left upon the soul, when God pardons it; though still there is something of filth left in it, when he sanctifies it. God does not pardon by halves, nor leave any guilt to be expiated by purgatory. 3. That, upon our faith and repentance, our sins, whether greater or less, fewer or more, shall be forgiven; for this makes no difference in infinite grace and mercy.

Q. *But may not this encourage men to continue in sin?*

A. Many do so abuse it; but their damnation is sure and just:

Deut. xxix. 19, 20, *And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The Lord will not spare him.*

Q. *You have formerly observed, that it is God alone who can forgive sins, and from thence inferred both the freeness and fulness of pardoning grace: what observe you farther?*

A. 1. That, though God's pardoning grace be altogether freely bestowed, in respect of us, Isaiah xliii. 25, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins:* yet, in respect of Christ's purchase, it is not free, but cost him the price of his blood: Heb. ix. 22, *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.* Matt. xxvi. 29, *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.* 2. That the obtaining of pardon is not free from the performance of condition on our part.

Q. *What are the conditions upon which pardon is granted?*

A. They are two; faith and repentance: Acts x. 43, *That through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins:* Acts iii. 19, *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.*

Q. *Is, therefore, a mere sorrow that we have sinned, a sufficient qualification for obtaining pardon?*

A. No: for so Judas is said to repent: Matt. xxvii. 3, *Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.* But, as true repentance includes in it a sorrow of heart; so reformation of life and manners is always joined with a lively faith.

Q. *Is pardon of sin an act only of God's mercy?*

A. It is likewise an act of God's justice to pardon the sins of those, who perform the conditions of the covenant of grace.

Q. *How prove you this?*

A. Both by express Scripture: 1 Epistle of John i. 9, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* And, likewise, by Scripture-Reason: because believers, being made mystically one with Christ, therefore, their sins, being already punished in him their Surety, and their debts paid by him, cannot be again justly punished in their own persons, nor demanded from them.

Q. *Is pardon of sin our entire Justification?*

A. No: but it is one principal part of it. For Justification

consists both in remission of sins, and acceptation of our persons: the former depends upon Christ's passive, the other upon his active obedience: his satisfaction, applied by faith, makes us accounted guiltless of death, and his obedience worthy of life; both which complete our justification: Eph. i. 6, 7, *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*

Q. *We have thus considered the petition,* "Forgive us our debts:" *what remains further considerable?*

A. The condition upon which we ask it; or the plea we urge for obtaining it: *As we forgive our debtors.*

Q. *Who are meant here by Debtors?* A. Other men.

Q. *How are men debtors one to another?*

A. Either, 1. By owing them a Debt of duty; and, thus, all men are mutually debtors to one another, superiors to inferiors, and inferiors to superiors; and equals owe one another love, respect and kindness. 2. By owing them a Debt of Satisfaction, for injuries and wrongs done to others.

Q. *Which of these debts is here meant?*

A. The latter only: for we are bound to forgive those, who owe us satisfaction and reparation.

Q. *What learn you from hence, that those, who have wronged others, are called Debtors?*

A. That they, who, in any kind, wrong others, are obliged to make them satisfaction: if in their good names, by acknowledging the offence, and stopping slanderous reports: if in their goods and estates, by a full restitution.

Q. *Is restitution necessary to the obtaining of pardon?*

A. It is: for unjust detainure is as evil, as unjust seisure; and it is a continued theft: and our repentance can never be true, while we continue in the sin we seem to repent of; and, without true repentance, there can be no pardon or salvation.

Q. *But what if those we have wronged be since dead?*

A. We ought to make restitution to those, to whom, it is to be supposed, what we have detained would have descended.

Q. *If none such can be found, what must we then do?*

A. Then God's right takes place, as the Universal Lord of All; and we are obliged to restore it to him: that is, to his servants and to his family, in the works of piety and charity.

Q. *We have already considered the debtor's duty; which is to make satisfaction and restitution: what is the duty of the creditor or person wronged?*

A. To forgive his debtors: for we pray that God would forgive us, AS we forgive them.

Q. *Wherein doth this forgiveness consist?*

A. In two things. 1. In abstaining from the outward acts of revenge upon them. 2. In the inward frame and temper of our hearts towards them; bearing them no grudge nor ill-will; but being as much in charity with them, as though they had never offended us.

Q. *Must we then sit quiet under every petulant wrong, that is done us; and so tempt others to the sport of abusing us?*

A. Private revenge is, in no case whatsoever, to be allowed: Rom. xii. 19, *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.* Revenge only belongs to God, and the magistrate to whom he hath delegated it: Rom. xiii. 4, *For he is the minister of God, a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

Q. *But if the wrong done us tend to the loss of our necessary subsistence or our life, may we not resist it, and require satisfaction for it?*

A. We may: but it must be only in a public and legal way: and, even then, we must harbour no malice again them; but be ready to perform all the offices of charity and kindness, within our power.

Q. *May we not prosecute those, who have wronged us, unless the injury be intolerable?*

A. We may, when we cannot pass by the wrongs without wronging others: but where the injuries are supportable, and we may forgive them without injuring of others, the law of Christianity commands us so to do: Matt. v. 39, *But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.* Where the scope of our Saviour is, that we should rather be willing to suffer a second injury, than to revenge the first in matters tolerable.

Q. *But since this is a duty so contrary to the revengeful humour of flesh and blood, what arguments can you produce to persuade to the practice of it?*

A. *First.* That it is far more honourable to forgive a wrong, than to revenge it.

Q. *How does that appear?*

A. 1. Because, by pardoning wrongs, we act like God; and imitate him in that attribute, wherein he chiefly glories: Exod. xxxiv. 6, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.* 2. Because, to pardon, is always the act of a superior; and a Christian expresseth the royalty of his calling, by issuing out of pardons.

Q. *What is the Second motive?*

A. Consider how many offences God hath forgiven us; though the distance between him and us is infinitely greater, than can be only between fellow-creatures; and though our offences against him are infinitely more and greater, than those which we are to forgive to others: theirs against us are but a few pence.

Q. *Which is the Third motive to enforce this duty?*

A. The consideration of that binding particle, AS: *forgive us, as we forgive others.*

Q. *Wherein lies the force of this?*

A. By this we seal the guilt of our sins upon our own souls, unless we be ready and willing to forgive others: and so we turn our prayers, not only into sin, but into a direful tremendous curse.

Q. *Which is the* SIXTH *and last* PETITION *of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Q. *What learn you from the method of this petition?*

A. In that it immediately follows the petition, wherein we prayed for pardon of sin, I learn that it should be our care, not only to seek for the pardon of past sins, but the prevention of future.

Q. *How is this petition divided?*

A. Into two branches: the one negative, *Lead us not into temptation;* the other positive, *But deliver us from evil.*

Q. *What signifies the word Temptation?*

A. It signifies proving or trying: which, sometimes, is done only by way of search and exploration; and, sometimes, is joined with suasion and inducement: so that temptations are either merely probatory; or else they are likewise suasory.

Q. *How many sorts of temptations are there?*

A. Five, in the general,—1. Whereby one man tempts another. 2. Whereby a man tempts himself. 3. Whereby we tempt God. 4. Whereby God tempts us. 5. Whereby the Devil tempts us.

Q. *How is one man said to tempt another?*

A When either he persuades him to what is evil: Prov. i. 10, *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* Or, to do that, which may bring him into danger: Luke xx. 23, *Why tempt ye me?*

Q. *How is man said to tempt himself?*

A. Two ways,—1. When he unnecessarily rusheth into danger, and ventures upon the next occasions of sinning. 2. When he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed: James i. 14, *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

Q. *How are we said to tempt God?*

A. Two ways,—1. When we, by our sins, provoke him to take vengeance upon us: Ps. xcv. 8, *Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.* 2. When we presumptuously try the Providence of God, having no warrant nor necessity to cast ourselves upon the extraordinary effects of it: Matt. iv. 6, 7, *And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.... Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

Q. *How is God said to tempt us?*

A. When, in the method of his Holy Providence, he brings us into such circumstances, as will discover either our graces or corruptions: Gen. xxii. 1, 2, *And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him.... Take now thy son.....and offer him up for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of:* 2 Chr. xxxii. 31, *God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.*

Q. *How doth the Devil tempt us?*

A. Alway by suasion; inducing us, by his art and subtlety, to the commission of evil.

Q. *What temptations do we especially pray against in this petition?*

A. Three sorts,—1. Such as proceed from our own lusts and corruption. 2. Such as proceed from other men's enticing us to evil, or ensnaring us to danger. 3. Such as proceed from the great tempter, the Devil.

Q. *What learn we hence?*

A. That it is a Christian's duty, not only to keep himself from sin, but also from temptation to sin.

Q. *What reasons confirm this?* 1. Because it is the sign of a rotten and corrupt heart, to be content to lie under a temptation, though it consents not to the sin. That soul is not chaste to God, that is well-pleased with solicitations to violate its duty. 2. Because, while a temptation dwells upon our hearts, we are in imminent danger of committing the sin to which we are tempted. 3. Because most temptations are not only temptations, but sins too, as all evil thoughts and desires: and, as long as these abide in us with any complacency and delight; so long are we in the actual commission of sin.

Q. *How is God said to lead men into temptation?*

A. Three ways,—1. When he providentially presents outward objects and occasions, which do solicit and draw forth our inward corruptions. 2. When he permits Satan, or wicked men, his instruments, to tempt us. And, in these two senses, there is no temptation whatsoever that befalls us, but God leads us into it. 3. When

he withdraws the influences of his grace and Spirit from us, without which dereliction no temptation could prevail over us: 2 Chr. xxxii. 31, *God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.*

Q. *What therefore do we pray for, when we pray, "Lead us not into temptation?"*

A. We pray for Three things,—1. That God, by his Providence, would so order and dispose all the occurrences of our lives, as not to lay before us those objects, nor offer us those occasions, which might excite or call forth our inbred corruptions. 2. That he would not permit the Devil to assault us, nor any of his instruments,—3. That he would continue the influences of his grace unto us, to enable us to stand when we are tempted.

Q. *For what ends doth God thus lead men into temptations?*

A. For many wise and holy ends: especially Four,—1. To exercise and breath forth our graces; to teach us the wars of the Lord; to administer matter for our victory, and occasion for our crown and triumph. 2. To engage us to depend upon his help and assistance, and earnestly to implore divine succours and supplies. 3. To glorify his justice and his mercy: his justice, in giving up wicked men to the rages of temptations, to be hurried by them from sin to sin; punishing one iniquity with another, till, at last, he punisheth all in hell: and his mercy, in supporting his children under them, and delivering them out of all their temptations; making his strength perfect in their weakness: 2 Cor. xii. 9, *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.* 4. That, by our victory over temptations, he may confound the malice of the Devil, and commend the excellency of his own ways and service: Job. ii. 3, *And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?*

Q. *Which is the positive part of this petition?*

A. "But deliver us from evil."

Q. *What observe you from the order and connection of this branch of the petition with the former?*

A. I observe, that the best security against sin, is to be secured against temptations to sin.

Q. *Are not strong temptations to sin, an excuse for sinning?*

A. No: for the Devil can only persuade, he cannot constrain: for if he could compel, he would likewise justify: since there is no sin, where there is no liberty. All our sins are of our own free choice; and so, by consequence, is the eternal misery they expose unto

Hos. xiii. 9, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself: but in me is thine help:* John v. 40, *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life:* Matt. xxiii. 37, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*

Q. *Wherein consists the great danger of being tempted?*

A. In the sympathy and suitableness, that are between temptations and our corrupt natures; whereby they are apt to excite our affections, and our affections will sway our actions.

Q. *What mean you by the word Evil, when you pray, "Deliver us from evil?"*

A. 1. Satan, whose style it is to be the Evil, or the Wicked One: Matt. xiii, 19, *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart:* I John ii. 13, 14, *I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him, that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.... I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.* 2. All other evils, whether they be of sin, or for sin; whether transgressions, or punishments; but especially sin, which is the greatest of all evils.

Q. *Why call you sin the greatest of all evils?*

A. Because it is so, both in its nature and consequents. 1. In its nature it is wholly defect and irregularity; and that only thing, which God always hates, and never made. 2. Because all other evils are but the effects and consequents of sin; since the Devil could not hurt us but by sin, and no other evils befall us but for sin.

Q. *What collect you hence?*

A. That, in praying to be delivered from sin, we pray to be delivered from all evils whatsoever.

Q. *What observe you from our Saviour's teaching us to direct our prayers to our Father in Heaven, that he would "deliver us from evil?"*

A. I learn hence, that it is only the Almighty Power of God, that can keep us from sin.

Q. *Whence doth that appear?*

A. 1. From the consideration of the mighty advantages, that our great enemy, the Devil, hath against us. 2. From the consideration of the disadvantages we lie under, to oppose his temptations.

Q. *What are his advantages, and our disadvantages?*

A. He is a spirit; we are but flesh: he is wise and subtle; we,

foolish and ignorant: he, long experienced; we, raw and unpractised: he is diligent and watchful; we, careless and negligent: he lays a close siege to us, without; and we betray ourselves, within.

Q. *What ways doth God take to keep men from sin?*

A. In the general Three,—1. He doth it by Restraining Providence. 2. By Common and Restraining Grace. 3. By Renewing and Sanctifying Grace.

Q. *What are the methods of God's Providence, whereby he delivers men from the evil of sin?*

A. They are manifold and various: but Five are most especially remarkable,—1. Sometimes, Providence cuts short their power, whereby they would be enabled to sin: thus God withered Jeroboam's hand, which he stretched forth against the prophet. 2. Sometimes, God cuts off their wicked instruments: either for counsel, as he did Ahithophel from Absalom; or else for execution, as he did the host of Sennacherib. 3. Sometimes, by raising up another opposite power, to withstand the sinner: thus, the rulers would have put Christ to death; but durst not, for fear of the people. 4. By casting in seasonable diversions: thus the passing-by of merchants altered the patriarchs' resolution, from killing Joseph, to selling him. 5. Sometimes, God removes the object against which they intended to sin: thus he delivered David from Saul, and Peter from Herod.

Q. *We have seen how God preserves men from sin, by his Restraining Providence: show now how he doth it, by his Restraining Grace.*

A. By Restraining Grace God deals with the very heart of a sinner: and, although he doth not change the habitual, yet he changeth the actual inclination of it; and takes away the desire of committing those sins, which are unmortified and reigning.

Q. *To whom doth God vouchsafe this grace?*

A. To many unregenerate persons. As he did to Esau and Abimelech.

Q. *To what end doth he vouchsafe it*

A. That their lives may be more plausible, their gifts more serviceable, and their condemnation at last more tolerable.

Q. *How doth God keep men from sin, by his Special Grace?*

A. By exciting the inward principle and habit of grace implanted in his children, to the actual use and exercise of it.

Q. *Is not inherent grace, alone, sufficient to keep the godly from sinning?*

A. It is not, without the continual influence of God's Quickening Grace: 2 Cor. xii. 7, *There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

Q. *What are those graces, that God doth especially excite, to keep his children from sin?*

A. They are Three: Faith, Fear, and Love.

Q. *How doth faith keep them from sinning?*

A. Many ways: but more especially, by Two,—1. As it lively represents unto us eternal rewards and punishments; and makes them as real, as they are certain: Heb. xi. 1, *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* 2. As it represents unto us God to be the observer of our actions, who must hereafter be the judge of them: for by faith, we see him who is invisible.

Q. *How doth the Fear of God keep men from sin?*

A. By possessing our hearts with awful thoughts of his dread majesty, whose power is infinite, and whose justice is strict and impartial: Ps. iv. 4, *Stand in awe, and sin not.*

Q. *How doth the Love of God keep men from sin?*

A. By working in them a holy ingenuity, and sympathy of affection with God; loving what he loves, and hating what he hates: and, therefore, those, who love God, will certainly hate iniquity: Ps. xcvii. 10, *Ye, that love the Lord, hate evil.*

Q. *What do we pray for in this part of the petition, "Deliver us from evil?"*

A. We pray,—1. That, if it shall please God to lead us into temptation, yet he would not leave us under the power of temptation: but would make a way for us to escape, that we might be able to bear it. 2. That, if, at any time, temptations should prevail over us, God would not leave us under the power of sin; but raise us again by true repentance, that so we may, at last, be delivered from the great evil of obduration and impenitency. 3. That God would not only deliver us from gross and self-condemning sins, but from every evil way and work. 4. That he would be pleased to deliver us, not only from what is in itself sinful, but from all the occasions and appearances of evil.

Q. *After the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, what next followeth to be considered?*

A. The DOXOLOGY or Praise, in these words, "For thine, &c."

Q. *Of what consisteth this Doxology?*

A. Of Four of God's most glorious attributes: his Sovereignty, *thine is the Kingdom;* his Omnipotence, *thine is the power;* his Excellency, *thine is the Glory;* his Eternity, all these are thine *for ever.*

Q. *What observe you in the Manner of our Saviour's ascribing these attributes to God?*

A. 1. The eminency of them, intimated in the particle, *the ; the* kingdom, *the* power, and *the* glory : signifying HIS, the highest and chiefest of all these. And, 2. The propriety of them, in the particle, *thine ;* to note to us, that they are God's only originally, independently, and unchangeably.

Q. *What observe you from the illative particle,* "for ;" *when ye say,* "for thine is the kingdom, &c.?"

A. This word carries in it the force of a reason ; both why we should pray unto God, and why we may expect to be heard when we pray.

Q. *How is it a reason for us to pray unto God?*

A. We pray unto God, because he is alone able to relieve us : for his *is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory for ever.*

Q. *How is it a reason for us to expect, that God should hear our prayers?*

A. Many ways,—1. His is the Kingdom, and we are his subjects ; and, therefore, we may depend on him, as our king, for help and protection. 2 His is the Power ; and, therefore, he is able to do for us abundantly above what we are able to ask or think. 3. His is the Glory ; and, therefore, what we ask for his honour and praise shall be granted us. 4. All these are his for ever ; and, therefore, we may be assured, that, at no time, the prayer of faith shall be in vain.

Q. *What observe you from our Saviour's teaching us to use these arguments and pleas in our prayers to God?*

A. Two things,—1. In our prayers we ought to plead with God, by weighty and enforcing reasons. 2. That the most prevailing arguments in prayer are to be taken from the attributes of God.

Q. *What benefit is there in using such reasons, since God cannot by them be moved to alter his purposes?*

A. The stronger our reasons are to sue for mercies, the more fervent will our prayers be, and the more confirmed our faith.

Q. *How doth the consideration of the Kingdom being God's confirm our faith that we shall obtain what we pray for?*

A. Many ways. 1. The Kingdom is God's : and, therefore, he will see that his name may be hallowed in it ; for he is a king jealous of his honour. 2. The kingdom is God's : therefore, he will take care for the establishment and enlargement of it ; since it is his own interest and concern. 3. The kingdom is God's : and therefore, he will look to be obeyed in it ; without which, royalty is but pageantry. 4. The kingdom is God's : and, therefore, we may expect our daily bread and temporal accommodations ; for it is a

kingly office, to provide things necessary for subjects. 5. The kingdom is God's: and, therefore, we pray to him for pardon and forgiveness; since it is a royal prerogative, to forgive offenders. 6. The kingdom is God's: and, therefore, we may pray in faith, that he would deliver us from temptations, and the evils to which we are tempted; for one great end of government is, to protect the subjects from the assaults of their cruel enemies.

Q. *Which is the Second Attribute ascribed unto God in the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Power: in these words, *and the Power.*

Q. *How is the power of God distinguished?*

A. Into his Absolute and his Ordinate Power.

Q. *What call you the Absolute Power of God?*

A. The Absolute Power of God is that, whereby he is simply able to produce whatsoever is possible to be, *i. e.* all things, which imply not contradiction.

Q. *What call you God's Ordinate Power?*

A. God's Ordinate Power is that, whereby he is able to produce those things, which, according to his will, shall come to pass.

Q. *Why is it called God's Ordinate Power?*

A. Because the effects of it are limited by the ordination of his wisdom and will: Ps. cxv. 3. *But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased:* Ps. cxxxv. 6. *Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*

Q. *Is God's power in itself infinite?*

A. It is: for his power is his essence.

Q. *How doth it appear that God's power is infinite?*

A. 1. By the works of creation: for it requires an infinite power to bring something out of nothing. 2. By the many miracles, which have been wrought in the world, above and contrary to the course of nature.

Q. *How then have many men wrought miracles; as Moses, Elijah, and the Apostles?*

A. They wrought them, not by any proper virtue of their own; but only as the moral instruments, at whose presence or intercession God was pleased to manifest his power, as a seal to that commission they had received from him.

Q. *Is God's power infinite, likewise, in the common effects of nature?*

A. It is: for it is no less power, that preserves and moves the creatures, than did at first create them.

Q. *Is there nothing impossible with God?*

A. Yes, there are several things, which God cannot do, because he is omnipotent.

Q. *What are they?*

A. Such as, in the general, the doing thereof would deny him to be God, or to be holy, or to be wise.

Q. *What are they more particularly?*

A. 1. God cannot do things, that are contradictory; or rather such things cannot be done: as, to make the same thing to be and not to be, at the same time; or, that the same body should at once, have quantity and extension in heaven, and no quantity nor extension in the host, as the papists affirm of their breaden God: for this were contrary to his wisdom. 2. God cannot do anything, that may justly bring upon him the imputation of sin: for this were contrary to his holiness. 3. God cannot do anything, that may argue him mutable and inconstant: for this were oontrary to his being: 2 Tim. ii. 13, *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself:* Heb. vi. 18, *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.*

Q. *Is it not a diminution of the power of God, that he cannot do those things?*

A. No: for these things argue weakness and defect, not power.

Q. *Why hath our Saviour taught us to subjoin this acknowledgment of the power of God to our petitions?*

A. To encourage our faith; by considering, that whatsoever we ask we ask it of a God who is able to give it us, yea, and to do for us abundantly above whatsoever we are able to ask or think.

Q. *What is the Third Attribute ascribed to God in the Doxology?*

A. Glory: in these words, *and the Glory.*

Q. *What is Glory?*

A. Glory is any perfection or excellency, that either is or deserves to be accompanied with fame and renown.

Q. *How is God's glory distinguished?*

A. Into his Essential and Declarative Glory.

Q. *What is the Essential Glory of God?*

A. All those attributes, which eternally and immutably belong unto the Divine Nature. So, holiness is his glory: Exod. xv. 11, *Glorious in holiness.* His power is his glory: 2 Thess. i. 9, They *shall be punished from,* i. e. *by, the glory of his power.* His majesty is his glory: Ps. cxlv. 5, *I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty.* His grace and mercy are his glory: Eph. i. 6, *To the praise of the glory of his grace.* And, from all these united, results the glory of his Name: Deut. xxviii. 58, *That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD.*

Q. *What is the Declarative Glory of God?*

A. The manifestation of his attributes, so that they are observed to his praise and honour.

Q. *What is it to glorify God?*

A. To glorify God, is, to admire and celebrate the Divine Attributes, shining forth in those ways and works, wherein he is pleased to express them.

Q. *Do we by glorifying God, add anything to his glory?*

A. We can neither add unto nor diminish from the Essential Glory of God; for his infinite perfections are the same for ever: but we may add to his Declarative Glory, by setting forth his attributes; and we detract from it, by hindering the manifestation of them.

Q. *By what means doth God declare his glory?*

A. Three especially, By his works: Ps. xix. 1, *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmanent showeth his handywork.* 2. By his word: which discovers to us those attributes, which we could never have known by the works of creation and providence; and, therefore both Law and Gospel are said to be glorious: 2 Cor. iii. 9, *For, if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.* 3. By his Son: who is the Brightness of his Glory: Heb. i. 3, *Who being he brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person:* and in whom the perfections of the Godhead are most visibly displayed.

Q. *Why doth our Saviour, in the Doxology, peculiarly appropriate glory unto God:* "Thine is the glory?"

A. For three reasons,—1. Because all that is excellent and glorious in the creatures, is in God infinitely more perfect than in them; being neither limited by his nature, nor allayed with contraries: 1. John i. 5, *That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* 2. Because all glory, in respect of God, is but darkness and obscurity: Job xxv. 5, *Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not: yea, the stars* are *not pure in his sight.* 3. Because all the excellencies and glories of creatures, serve only to set forth and declare the glory of God.

Q. *Why hath our Saviour added the acknowledgment of God's glory* of *the end of the petitions he hath taught us to present?*

A. That the consideration thereof may be a means to strengthen our faith, for the obtaining those good things which we pray for.

Q. *How is the consideration of the glory of God an argument to strengthen our faith in prayer?*

A. Many ways, according to the petition we prefer. 1. The glory is God's: therefore, his Name shall be hallowed; for to sanctify the Name of God is to glorify him: Lev. x. 3, *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified*

2. The glory is God's: and, therefore, his kingdom shall come; for where should a king be honoured, but in his kingdom? 3. The glory is God's: therefore, his will shall be done; for our obedience is the greatest glory we can give: John xv. 8, *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.* 4. The glory is God's: and, therefore, he will provide for us, daily bread; for it is not God's honour, that any of his family should want things convenient for them: Exod. xvi. 7, *And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord.* 5. The glory is God's: and, therefore, he will forgive our trespasses; for it is his honour and royalty to pardon penitent offenders; Prov. xix. 11, *And it is his glory to pass over a transgression:* Eph. i. 6, 7, *To the praise of the glory of his grace.... In whom we have redemption though his blood the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* 6. The glory is God's: and, therefore, he will deliver us from the assaults of our enemies; for it is his honour to protect his subjects.

Q. *What observe you from that particle,* "for ever?"

A. That God and his attributes are eternal.

Q. *What is Eternity?*

A. Eternity is a duration, that hath neither beginning nor end, nor succession of parts: or, it is the complete possession of an endless life all at once.

Q. *What collect you hence?*

A. Two things,—1. The duration of God is not to be measured by days or years: and that he waxeth not older; neither hath continued longer this day, than from the beginning of time. 2. That, in strict propriety of speech, God only is: and that it is only allowable, for want of expressions, to say, that he either was or shall be: and therefore he calls his name, *I am:* Exod. iii. 14, *I AM, hath sent me unto you.*

Q. *How prove you that God is eternal?*

A. Both by Scripture and Reason.

Q. *What Scriptures prove the eternity of God?*

A. Several: especially Psalm cii. 25, 26, 27, *Thou art the same and thy years shall have no end:* Ps. xc. 2, *From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God;* 1 Tim. i. 17, *To the King eternal, immortal.... be honour and glory.*

Q. *How do you demonstrate the eternity of God by Reason?*

A. There must, of necessity, be a First Cause of all things: but that, which is the First Cause of all things, cannot be made by any, and therefore is from everlasting; neither can it cease to be, because it is not dependent on any, and therefore must be to everlasting.

Q. *What duties doth the serious consideration of God's eternity oblige us to?*

A. 1. To venerate and adore so great and inconceivable an attribute. 2. To leave the care of all future events, whether concerning our own private or the public interests, to his eternal wisdom and providence, who for ever lives to mind them. 3. To give unto him the same honour, respect, and service, which his Saints have done in former generations.

Q. *What encouragement hath our faith to expect the mercies we pray for, from the consideration of God's eternity?*

A. That, because he is the same God, who, in all ages, hath heard the prayers of those who trust in him; therefore, we may be assured that, if we have the same dispositions and affections with the Saints of old, we shall obtain the same mercies and favours: Heb. i. 12, *But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.*

Q. *What signifies the particle* "Amen," *which is the* END *and* CLOSE *of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. As, in the beginning of a speech, it is assertory; and signifies, *so it is:* so, in the end of it, it is precatory; and signifies, *so be it;* which denotes our earnest desires to have our prayers heard and our petitions granted.

Q. *What learn you from hence, that our Saviour hath taught us to conclude our prayers with* "Amen?"

A. I learn Two things,—1. That we ought to pray with understanding; and, therefore, not in an unknown tongue: for who can say Amen, to what he understands not? 1 Cor. xiv. 16, *How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?* 2. That all our prayers ought to be presented to God, with fervent zeal and affection: 1 Thess. v. 17, *Pray without ceasing.*

Q. *What is prayer?*

A. Prayer is an humble representation of our wants and desires to God, through the assistance of the Holy Ghost, in the Name of Christ, for things according to his will, with reference to his glory.

Q. *What is it to pray by the Spirit, or by the assistance of the Holy Ghost?*

A. To pray by the Spirit, is, to present our requests to God, with holy and fervent affections excited in us by the Holy Ghost: Rom. viii. 26, *But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Q. *May those have the Spirit of prayer, who have not the Gift of prayer?*

A. Yes, they may: and, on the contrary, some may have the Gift of Prayer, who pray not by the Spirit; for they, who use prescribed and set Forms of Prayer, pray by the Spirit, when their petitions are accompanied with fervent affections, stirred in them by the Holy Ghost; and, again, some, who are most fluent in conceived prayer may pray only from the strength of their natural parts and endowments.

A. *But doth not the use of Forms damp and quench the Spirit of prayer?*

A. Forms, indeed, are too often used formally; and so is any other kind of prayer: yet it is the truest test and the highest excellency of praying by the Spirit, when we are fervent in putting up those requests to God, where neither novelty, variety, nor copiousness of expressions can be suspected to move our affections; but only the genuine importance of the matter, which we pray for, though in prescribed words.

Q. *To whom must our prayers be directed?*

A. To God only; and not to saints or angels.

Q. *How ought we to conceive of God, when we pray to him?*

A. As an infinitely glorious, wise, powerful, and gracious being, whose presence is every where, whose providence and goodness is over all things; and thus we pray, at once, to each Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity.

Q. *May we not particularly address our prayers, to some one person of the Trinity?*

A. We may: especially in those cases, wherein their particular offices and dispensations are more immediately concerned.

Q. *What things ought we to pray for?*

A. Only such as are according to the will of God: 1 John v. 14. *That if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*

Q. *What are those things which are according to the will of God?*

A. Chiefly spiritual blessings: 1 Thess. iv. 3, *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.* And, for these, we ought to pray absolutely and importunately.

Q. *May we not also pray for temporal mercies?*

A. We may: but, as these are promised only conditionally; so we ought to pray, that God would be pleased to bestow them upon us, if it may stand with his will and glory, and our good and benefit.

Q. *How must we direct our prayers to God?*

A. 1. In the name of Christ, trusting only in his merits and Mediation, for acceptance and answer: John xv. 16, *That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.* 2. In faith and persuasion of being heard: James i. 6, *But let him ask in*

faith, nothing wavering: Mark xi. 24, *What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* 3. With fervency and affection: James v. 16, *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

Q. *What ends ought we to propound to ourselves in begging blessings at God's hands?*

A. Chiefly the glory of God; sincerely purposing to improve those blessings, which, by our prayers, we shall receive, in his service and to his praise: Ps. 1. 15, *And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

Q. *What directions have we concerning the seasons and frequency of praying?*

A. The Scripture commands us to pray without ceasing: 1 Thess. v. 17, *Pray without ceasing:* to pray always and not to faint: Luke xviii. 1, *And he spake a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint:* to pray always with all prayer and supplication: Ephes. vi. 18, *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.*

Q. *Must we therefore be always so actually engaged in this duty as to do nothing but pray?*

A. No: for, therefore, we pray, that we may obtain grace from God, to perform other duties of religion, and a Christian life. Neither ought the duties of our particular callings to be neglected by us; nor we jostle out one duty by another: besides the sinful omission of what we should perform, that, which we do perform becomes unacceptable, because unseasonable; and so we commit two sins, in doing one duty.

Q. *What then is it to pray without ceasing?*

A. Prayer may be said to be without ceasing Four ways,—1. When we observe a constant course of prayer, at fixed and appointed times: thus, Gen. viii. 22, God promised that winter and summer, day and night, should not cease: and so the daily sacrifice is called a *continual burnt-offering:* Exod. xxix. 42; and yet it was offered only morning and evening. 2. When we are frequent and importunate in our prayers: so, Acts xii. 5, the Church is said to make prayers for Peter *without ceasing:* and our Saviour spake the Parable of the Importunate Widow to this end, *That men ought always to pray, and not to faint: Luke* xviii. 1. 3. When we frequently dart up short mental prayers and ejaculations unto God: which we may and ought to do, whatsoever else we are employed about: Neh. ii. 4, *So I prayed to the God of Heaven.* 4. When we keep our hearts in a praying frame and temper, so that they are, on all occasions, fit

and ready to pour out themselves before God in prayer; and thus we habitually pray always.

Q. *What must we observe, to maintain and cherish such a praying spirit?*

A, Two things especially,—1. That we ingulf not ourselves too deeply in the businesses and pleasures of this life: for these will darken and deaden the heart to prayer. 2. That we fall not into the commission of any known and presumptuous sin; for guilt will fill us with slavish fear and shame, and both will drive us from God.

Q. *What are the kinds of Prayer?*

A. Three,—1. Public: as we are members of the Church. 2. Private: as we stand engaged in Family Relation. And, 3. Secret: as we are particular Christians.

Q. *Who is to send up Public Prayers?*

A. The Minister, and all the Congregation joining with him. And these prayers, though they must needs be more general, yet, withal, are more effectual than any other: Matt. xviii. 19, *Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.*

Q. *Who is to make Private or Family Prayers?*

A. Every Master and Governor of a Family: and this he is not to do seldomer, than every morning and evening. In the morning, prayer is the key, that opens the treasury of God's mercies: in the evening, it is the key, that shuts us up under his protection and safeguard.

AN EXPOSITION

UPON THE

COMMANDMENTS.*

INTRODUCTION.

THERE are two things, in the general, which perfect a Christian: the one, is a clear and distinct knowledge of his duty; the other, a conscientious practice of it, correspondent to his knowledge: and both these are, in an equal degree, necessary.† For, as we can have no solid nor well-grounded hopes of eternal salvation, without obedience, so we can have no sure nor established rule for our obedience, without knowledge: and, therefore, our work and office, is, not only exhortation, but instruction; not only to excite the affections, but to inform the judgment; and we must as well illuminate, as warm.

Knowledge, indeed, may be found without practice: and our age abounds with such Speculative Christians, whose religion is but like the rickets, that make them grow large in the head, but narrow in the breast; whose brains are replenished with notions, but their hearts straitened towards God; and their lives and actions as black and deformed, as if their light had only tanned and discoloured them. I confess, indeed, that their knowledge may be beneficial unto others; who may savourily feed upon that meat, which these do only mince and carve: yet, where it is thus overborne by unruly lusts, and contradicted by a licentious conversation, to themselves it is most fatal and baneful. It is like light shut up in a lantern, which may serve to guide and direct others, but only soots, and at last burns that which contained it.

But, although knowledge may be thus without practice; yet it is utterly impossible, that the practice of godliness should be without knowledge.

For, if we know not the limits of sin and duty, what is required

* The original Edition of this Treatise had prefixed to it a short Address by the Bishop of Cork and Rosse.

† Πολυσχιδες μεν της θειας διδασκαλιας το σχημα συναιρειται δε ὡς εν κεφαλαιω εις τε μαθησιν εντολων. και φιλαξην, εις τε την θειαν γνωσιν, και προσκυνησιν. Just. Mart. Expos. Fidei.

of us and what is forbidden, it cannot be supposed, but that, in this corrupted state of our natures, we shall unavoidably run into many heinous miscarriages; unless it were possible for us to please God at unawares, and so get to heaven by great chance.

And, therefore, that we might be informed what we ought to do and what to avoid, it hath pleased God, who is the great Governor, and will be the Righteous Judge of all the World, to prescribe us laws for the regulating of our actions: and, that we might not be ignorant what they are, he hath openly promulgated them in his word. For when we had miserably defaced the Law of Nature, originally written in our hearts, so that many of the commands of it were no longer legible, it seemed good to his Infinite Wisdom and Mercy, to transcribe and copy out that Law in the sacred tables of the Scriptures; and to super-add many positive precepts and injunctions, which were not before imposed.

The Bible, therefore, is the Statute-Book of God's Kingdom. Therein is comprised the whole body of the heavenly law; the perfect rules of a holy life, and the sure promises of a glorious one.

And the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, is a summary or brief epitome of those laws, written by the immediate finger of God: and contracted into so short an abridgment, not only to ease our memories, but to gain our veneration; for sententious commands are best befitting Majesty. And, indeed, if we consider the paucity of the expressions, and yet the copiousness and variety of the matter contained in them, we must needs acknowledge, not only their authority to be divine, but likewise the skill and art in reducing the Whole Duty of Man to so brief a compendium. The words are but few, called therefore *the Words of the Covenant, the Ten* Words: Exod. xxxiv. 28; but the sense and matter contained in them, is vast and infinite. The rest of the Scripture is but a commentary upon them: either exhorting us to obedience, by arguments; or alluring us to it, by promises; or frighting us from transgressing, by threatenings: or exciting us to the one, and restraining us from the other, by examples recorded in the historical part of it.

But, before I come to speak of the Commandments themselves, it will be necessary to premise something concerning the TIME, the REASON, and MANNER OF THEIR DELIVERY.

I. The TIME, according to the best computation of chronology, was about two thousand four hundred and sixty years after the Creation of the World; two hundred and twenty years after Israel's descent into Egypt; and *the third month* after their departure out of

Egypt; Exod. xix. 1; before the birth of Christ almost fifteen hundred years, and therefore about three thousand before our days. This was the first time, that God selected to himself a National Church in the world: and therefore it seemed expedient to his wisdom, to prescribe them laws and rules, how they ought to order both their demeanour, and his worship and service. Before this, the Law of Nature was the standing rule for obedience: but because it was blotted and razed by the first transgression, it was supplied, in many particulars, by traditions delivered down from one to another. And those of the patriarchs, who, according to the prescripts of this law, endeavoured to please and serve God, were accepted of him; and frequently obtained the privilege of especial revelations, either by dreams, or visions, or heavenly voices, concerning those things wherein they were more particularly to obey his will. In those first ages, God made no distinction of people or nations: but, as it is since the wall of partition is broken down, and the Jewish economy abrogated by the death of Christ; so was it before, that, *in every nation, he that* feared *God, and* wrought *righteousness,* was *accepted* of *him:* Acts x. 35.

II. But, the world totally degenerating into vile superstitions and idolatries, the knowledge and fear of the true God was scarcely any where to be found, but only in the family and posterity of Abraham: and, even there too, we have reason to suspect a great decay and corruption; especially in their long abode among the idolatrous Egyptians; yea, the Scripture doth in several places expressly charge them with it: Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 7, 8: and, in all probability, they took the pattern of their golden calf from the Egyptian Apis, being idolaters only in a younger figure and a lesser volume. God, therefore, justly rejects all the rest of the world; but, being mindful of his promise to their father and *the father of the faithful,* appropriates this people to himself as his peculiar inheritance. And BECAUSE it was manifest by experience, that neither the Law of Nature, nor oral tradition handed down along from one generation to another, were of sufficient force to preserve alive the knowledge and worship of the true God; but, notwithstanding these, the whole earth was become wicked and idolatrous: that, therefore, this people, whom God had now taken to himself, might have all possible advantages to continue in his fear and service, and that they might not degenerate as the rest of the world had done, he himself proclaims unto them that law by which he would govern them, writes it upon tables of stone, commits them into the hands of Moses whom he had constituted his lieutenant, and commands them to be laid up

in the ark as a perpetual monument of his authority and their duty. How wretchedly depraved are our natures, when even that, which is the very light and law of them, is so obliterated and defaced, that God would rather entrust its preservation to stones, than to us; and thought it more secure, when engraven on senseless tables, than when written on our hearts!

III. The MANNER, wherein this Law was delivered, is described to be very terrible and astonishing. The wisdom of God designed it so, on purpose to possess the people with the greater reverence of it; and to awaken in their souls a due respect to those old despised dictates of their natures, when they should see the same laws revived and invigorated with so much circumstance and terror: for, indeed, the Decalogue is not so much the enacting of any new law, as a reviving of the old by a more solemn proclamation.

And, for the greater majesty and solemnity of the action, we read,

i. That THE PEOPLE WERE COMMANDED TO PREPARE THEMSELVES, TWO DAYS TOGETHER, BY A TYPICAL CLEANSING OF THEMSELVES FROM ALL EXTERNAL AND BODILY POLLUTIONS, BEFORE THEY WERE TO STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

So we find it enjoined: they were to be sanctified, and to wash their clothes, and *be ready against the third day,* whereon *the Lord* would *come down in the sight of all the people, upon Mount Sinai:* Exod. xix. 10, 11. Now this signifies unto us Two things:

1. That *we ought to be seriously prepared, when we come to wait before God in his ordinances, and to receive a law at his mouth.*

Indeed, the dispensation of the Gospel is not such a ministry of terror, as that of the Law was. God doth not now speak unto us immediately by his own voice; which they that heard it, were not able to endure: he doth not pronounce his Law in thunder, nor wrap it up in flame and smoke; but he speaks unto us in a still voice, by men like ourselves; and conveys the rich treasure of his will unto us in earthen vessels, of the same mould and frailty with ourselves. He treats with us by his messengers and ambassadors; whose errand, though it be delivered with less terror, yet ought not to be received with less reverence: for it is God himself, that speaks in them, and by them; and every word of truth, which they deliver unto you in the name of the great God, and by the authority of that commission which he hath given them, ought to be received with as much prostrate veneration and affection, as though God himself had spoken to you immediately from heaven.

Think, then how solicitous the Israelites were, in fitting themselves for that great and dreadful day of hearing the Law; a day, more

great and dreadful than ever any shall be, except that of judging men according to the Law. Think how their hearts throbbed and thrilled within them, when they heard the clang of the heavenly trumpets mixed and blended with loud and terrible cracks of thunder; and both giving them a signal of the near approach of God. Think, if you can, what thoughts they had, when they saw the mountain burning with fire, and enveloped with clouds and smoke; out of which, on every side, were fearful lightnings shot among them. Think how they trembled, when they saw the mountain tremble and totter under the weight and greatness of God descending down upon it. And bring with you the same affections; if not so terrified, yet as much over-awed, whensoever you come to wait upon his holy ordinances: for it is the same God, that speaks unto you; and he speaks the same things to you, as then he did: not, indeed, with such amazing circumstances; yet with the very same authority and majesty.

Were God now to come down among you in his terrible majesty, or should a thick cloud fill this place, and lightnings flash out of it; should you hear the thunder of his voice, *I am the Lord: thou shalt have no other gods before me:* certainly, such a dreadful glory would make your hearts tremble within you, and the very earth tremble under you. Could you then give way to sloth and drowsiness? Could your hearts run gadding after vanities and trifles? Or could there be any object considerable enough to divert your thoughts and affections from so terrible a glory? Why, believe it, God is as really present here, as when he thus manifested himself to the Israelites; and present, upon the very same occasion too. He is now delivering his Law to you; pronouncing his high and sovereign commands: and, if he so far consults our weakness, as not to do it in such an astonishing manner; yet far be that disingenuity from us, that we should be either the less careful to prepare for, or the lest reverent in attending on the declarations of his high will and pleasure, though he make it known to us by men of the same temper, yea or distempers, with ourselves.

2. If the Israelites were to sanctify and prepare themselves to appear before God at Mount Sinai, *how much more ought we to sanctify ourselves, that we may be meet to appear before God in heaven!*

That glory, which God manifested when he delivered the Law, is not comparable to the infinite glory, which he always reveals to the saints in heaven: and yet, if the people of the Jews were not allowed to see God, though veiled with a cloud and thick darkness, without being first accurately prepared for such a glorious discovery;

how much more ought we to prepare ourselves, to wash our filthy garments, and to cleanse our souls from all defilements both of flesh and spirit, that we may be worthy to stand before God, and to see him there where he darts forth the full rays of his brightness, and causeth his glory for ever to appear without any check or restraint, without any cloud or veil interposing to hide it. That is the first circumstance observable in the Delivery of the Law.

ii. THE MOUNT, ON WHICH GOD APPEARED, WAS TO BE FENCED AND RAILED IN; with a strict prohibition, that none should presume to pass the bounds there set them, nor approach to touch the holy mount, under the penalty of death.

So we have it Exod. xix. 12, which intimates unto us Two things:

1. The *due distance, that we ought to keep from God:* and teacheth us to observe all that reverence and respect, which belongs unto him, as being infinitely our superior. Certainly, the very places, where God manifests himself, at least whilst he doth so, are venerable and awful: and, therefore, when God revealed himself to Jacob in a dream, and gave him the representation of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, angels upon every round of it, and God on the top, we find with what awe he reflects upon it, in his waking thoughts, *Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven:* Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

2. This setting bounds and limits to the mount, signified, as in a type, *the strictness and exactness of the Law of God.* His Law is our boundary; which he hath on purpose set, to keep us from rushing in upon his neck, and upon the thick bosses of his buckler: and that soul, that shall presume so to do, that shall break these bounds, and commit a trespass upon the Almighty, shall surely die the death; even that eternal death, which he hath threatened against all violaters of his Law. That is a second remarkable circumstance in the Delivery of the Law.

iii. We have a description of THE TERRIBLE MANNER, IN WHICH GOD APPEARED TO PRONOUNCE HIS LAW. Thunders, and lightnings, and earthquakes, and fire, and darkness, were the prologue and introduction to it: and were so dreadful, as caused not only the people to remove and stand afar off, as not able to endure such terrible majesty, as we find it, Exod, xx. 18, but even affrighted Moses himself, who was to be *Internuncius Dei*, "the messenger and herald of God." This we find intimated, Exod. xix. 19, *When the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake.* What it was, that he said, is not there mentioned; but, in all pro-

bability, he then spake those words, which the Apostle hath recorded, *So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:* Heb. xii. 21. Now this dreadful appearance of God, in the Delivering of the Law, served for Two ends:

1. *To affect them with a reverent esteem of those commands, which he should impose upon them.* For, certainly, unless they were possessed with most gross and beastial stupidity, they must needs think those things to be of vast and great concernment, which were attended with such a train of remarkable and amazing circumstances: and it is natural for men to be awed by pomp and solemnity; the majesty of the commander adding a kind of authority to the command.

2. *To put both them and us in mind, that, if God were so terrible only in delivering the Law, how much more terrible he will then be, when he shall come to judge us for transgressing the Law.*

Indeed, the whole apparatus of this day seems to be typical of the Last: but, as it is the condition of all types, it shall be far outdone and exceeded by its antitype. Here were voices, and fire, and smoke, and the noise of a trumpet; and these struck terror into the hearts of the people, who came only to receive the Law: but, oh, think what consternation will seize upon and cramp the hearts of sinners, when *the Lord shall descend from heaven,* at the Last Day *with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,* as the Apostle describes it: 1 Thess. iv. 16; when, not a mountain only, but the whole world shall be burning; heaven and earth all on a light flame about them: when they shall hear the terrible voice of *the Majesty on High* calling to them, *Awake, ye dead, and come away to judgment:* when the earth shall be universally shaken, and shake the dead bodies out of their graves: when whole crowds of naked nations shall throng and cluster about the Great Tribunal; not to receive a law, but a sentence, a sentence that shall determine their final and eternal estate. Certainly, if the giving of the Law were so full of terror, much more terrible shall be our being judged according to that Law. And this is another remarkable circumstance in the Delivery of the Law.

iv. When God himself had, with his dread voice, spoken to them these Ten Words, their affright and astonishment was so great, that they ENTREAT MOSES TO BE THE TRUCAMAN AND INTERPRETER BETWEEN GOD AND THEM: *They said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die*: Exod. xx. 19.

Neither is this without a great mystery and excellent signification: for it intimates that the Law, as it is dispensed to us only from God, is in itself the ministration of death and condemnation;

but, as it is delivered to us by a Mediator, by our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Moses here was a type, so we may hear and observe it, and obtain eternal life, not for, but through our obedience to it.

And, therefore, the Law is said to be *ordained by angels in the hand of a meditator:* Gal. iii. 19; that is, it was solemnly dispensed by the ministry of angels, and then delivered into the hand of Moses, to be by him communicated to the people. Now this intimates unto us, that the severity and terrors of the Law were intended to drive us unto Christ, as here they drove the Israelites unto Moses, the type of Christ, from whose mouth the Law spake not so dreadfully, as it did from God's.

v. Upon this intercession and request of the people, MOSES IS CALLED UP INTO THE MOUNT, AND THE LAW DEPOSITED IN HIS HANDS, engraven in two tables of stone, by the finger and impression of God himself: the most sacred relique, that ever the world enjoyed; but at length lost, together with the ark that contained it, in the frequent removes and captivities of that people.

Neither is this, too, without its spiritual mystery and signification: for it notes to us, that our hearts are naturally so hard and stony, that it is only the finger of God, that can make any impression of his laws upon them. It is well known, that the ark was a most famous type and representation of Jesus Christ: and the keeping of the tables of the Law in the ark, what doth it else mean; but to prefigure to us, that the Law was to be kept and observed in him, who fulfilled all righteousness? And when God doth again write his laws upon our hearts, we also keep them in Christ our ark, whose complete obedience supplies all our imperfections and defects.

vi. Whereas this Law of the Ten Commandments was TWICE WRITTEN BY GOD HIMSELF; once before, and again after, the tables were in a holy zeal broken by Moses:

This also is full of mystery, and signifies the twice writing of the Law upon the hearts of men: first, by the creating finger of God, when he made us perfectly like himself; and, then again, by his regenerating power, giving us a new impression, and as it were setting us forth in a new edition, but yet containing the same for substance, as when we came forth at first out of the creating-hand of God: for regeneration and the new birth is but a restoring to the image of God, which we defaced by our fall in Adam; and, as it were, a new stamping of those characters of himself, in righteousness and knowledge, which were obliterated.

vii. It is said, that, when Moses came down from the Mount, after

his long converse with God, HIS FACE SHONE WITH SUCH A DIVINE AND HEAVENLY LUSTRE, THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE DAZZLED WITH THE BRIGHTNESS, AND COULD NOT STEADFASTLY LOOK UPON HIM: and that, therefore, he was forced to put a veil over his face, to allay and temper those beams, which the reflection of God's face and presence had cast upon him; but this veil he laid aside, when he turned into the tabernacle to speak with God: Exod. xxxiv. 29, &c.

The significancy of which history the Apostle expressly gives us: 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 15. That there was a veil upon the heart of the Jews, so as they could not see to the end of the Law, which is Christ Jesus: who is the end of the Ceremonial Law, by putting an end unto it in its abrogation; and the end of the Moral Law, because in him it hath attained its end, for the end of it was, by convincing us of our own weakness and inability to perform it, to lead us unto Christ, by whose righteousness alone, and not by the works of the Law, we are to expect justification before God. Yet there was so thick a veil cast over the Law, that the Jews could not look through it upon the glory that shone in Christ, of whom Moses was still the type: but, when they shall turn unto the Lord, this veil shall be taken away; and then shall they discern the significancy of all those ritual observances, and perceive spiritual things after a more sublime and spiritual manner.

And thus I have shown you the Time, the Reasons, and the Circumstances of the Delivery of this epitome of the Law in the Ten Commandments; wherein many excellent Gospel-Truths are delineated and shadowed out unto us.

IV. But, some one may say, "What need all this long discourse about the Law? Is it not fully abrogated, by the coming of Christ into the world? Shall we be again brought under that heavy yoke of bondage, which neither we nor our fathers were ever able to bear? Doth not the Scripture frequently testify, that we are not now under the Law, but under Grace? that we are freed from the Law? that Christ was made under the Law, to free those who were under the Law? and, therefore, to terrify and overawe men's consciences by the authority of the Law, what else is it but a Legal Dispensation, unworthy of that Christian Liberty into which our Saviour hath vindicated us, having fulfilled the Law by his obedience, and by his death abolished it?"

To this I answer: Far be it from every Christian to indulge himself in any licentiousness, from such a corrupt and rotten notion of the Law's abrogation; for, so far is it from being abolished by the

coming of Christ, that he himself expressly tells us, he came not *to destroy the Law, but to fulfil* it: Matt. v. 17; Τον νομον πληρωσαι: i. e. either to perform, or else to perfect and fill up the Law: and, verse 18, assevers, that *till heaven and earth pass* away, *one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled:* i. e. till the consummation and fulfilling of all things; and then the Law, which was our rule on earth, shall become our nature in heaven.

When, therefore, St. Paul speaks, as frequently he doth of the abrogation and disannulling of the Law, we must heedfully DISTINGUISH, BOTH OF THE LAW, AND LIKEWISE OF THE ABROGATION OF IT.

The Law, which God delivered by Moses's ministry was of Three sorts: The CEREMONIAL, JUDICIAL, and MORAL Law. The distinct consideration of each of these may afford us some light in this matter.

The Ceremonial Law was wholly taken up in enjoining those observances of sacrifices and offerings, and various methods of purifications and cleansings, which were typical of Christ; and that sacrifice of his, which alone was able to take away sin.

The Judicial Law consisted of those constitutions, which God prescribed the Jews for their civil government. For their state was a Theocracy: and, whereas, in other commonwealths, the chief magistrates give laws unto the people, in this, the laws for their religion and for their civil government were both divine, and both immediately from God. So that their Judicial Law was given them to be the standing law of their nation; according to which all actions and suits, between party and party, were to be tried and determined: as, in all other nations, there are particular laws and statutes, for the decision of controversies that may arise among them.

But the Moral Law is a system or body of those precepts which carry an universal and natural equity in them; being so conformable to the light of reason and the dictates of every man's conscience, that, as soon as ever they are declared and understood, we must needs subscribe to the justice and righteousness of them.

These are the Three sorts of laws which commonly go under the name of the Law of Moses: all of which had respect, either to those things, which prefigured the Messias to come; or to those, which concerned their political and civil government, as a distinct nation from others; or to such natural virtues and duties of piety towards God, and righteousness towards men, as were common to them with all the rest of mankind.

Now a law may be said to be null and void Two ways; priva-

tively, or negatively: either that it was repealed after it was first given; or that its obligation extendeth not, nor ever did extend, to some people and nations in the world.

Now I desire you heedfully to attend to these propositions: for they will be of great use to clear up how far, and in what manner, we are freed from the obligation of the Law.

i. As for the CEREMONIAL LAW, we affirm,

1. That *to the Jews it is properly abrogated, and the obligation and authority of it utterly taken away and repealed.*

And, concerning this it is, that the apostle is to be understood, when, in his Epistles, he so often speaks of the abrogation and disannulling of the Law; he speaks it, I say, of the Ceremonial Law and Aaronical Observations: which, indeed, were so fulfilled by Christ as to be abolished. For this Law was given only to be an adumbration, and σκιαγραφια, or faint representation of Christ. As, in the night, while the sun is in the other hemisphere, yet we see its light in the stars, which shine with a borrowed and derived brightness; but, when the sun is risen and displays its beams abroad, it drowns and extinguisheth all those petty lights; so, while Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, was yet in the other hemisphere of time, before he was risen with healing under his wings, the Jews saw some glimmering of his light in their ceremonies and observances; but, now that the day of the Gospel is fully sprung, and that light which before was but blooming is fully spread, those dimmer lights are quite drowned and extinguished in his clear rays, and an utter end is put to all those rites and ceremonies which both intimated, and in a kind supplied, the absence of the substance. So that, to maintain now a necessity of legal sacrifices, and purifyings, and sprinklings, is no less, than to evacuate the death of Christ; and to deny the shedding of that blood, that alone can purify us from all pollution: which is but, to catch at the shadow, and lose the substance.

2. *In respect of us, who are the posterity and descendants of the Gentiles,* it is more proper to affirm, That *the ceremonial law was never in force,* than that it was truly abrogated: for the Ceremonial Law was national to the Jews; and, in a sort, peculiar to them only: neither did God intend that the observation of it should be imposed upon any other people, although they should be proselyted, as a thing necessary for their future happiness. And this appears by strong and cogent reasons:

(1) Because God expressly commands all those, who were to be subject to the Ceremonial Law, that they should appear at Jerusalem, thrice in the year, before the Lord: Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24. Now

this command would have been impossible to be obeyed, were it intended that its obligation should reach to those countries, which were far remote and distant from Jerusalem.

(2) Because all their sacrifices and oblations, in which consisted the chiefest part of the Ceremonial Worship, were to be offered up only at Jerusalem: which were alike impossible, if this command of sacrificing had been intended by God to be obligatory to all the world. No sacrifices were accepted by God, but what were offered up in the temple: and therefore the Jews, to this day, although they are very blindly zealous of the Law, yet offer no sacrifices unto God; looking upon themselves as dispensed from that duty, because of their dispersion, and the impossibility of assembling themselves to Jerusalem to do it. And therefore, doubtless, that command, even whilst it was in force, obliged none but the Jewish Nation; who, living not far from the metropolis, might, with conveniency enough, assemble themselves together to that holy service.

(3) We find, that, even before Christ's coming, the Jews themselves did not impose the observation of the Ceremonial Rites of their Law, upon all those heathens whom they won over to be proselytes to their religion: for their proselytes were of two sorts:

Such as were *Proselyti Legis*, who became perfect Jews in religion, lived among them, and engaged themselves to the full observance of the whole Law: *

And such as were called *Proselyti Portæ;* that is, those heathens, who were so far converted, as to acknowledge and worship the only true God, although they lived in other nations, and obliged not themselves to the performance of what the Levitical Law required. These the Jews admitted into participation of the same common hope and salvation with themselves; when they professed their faith in God the Creator, and their obedience to the Law of Nature, together with the Seven Traditional Precepts of Noah. †

From all which, it clearly appears, that the Ceremonial Law, to speak properly, is not abrogated to us Gentiles; it never being given with an intent to oblige us: but is truly abrogated and disannulled to the Jews by the coming of Christ, the Messias, into the world: in whom all these types were to receive their full accomplishment.

And, concerning the ablation of this Ceremonial Law, we must

* Ger. Berith: *Proselyti Fœderis:* and called also, Ger. Thedek: *Proselyti Justitiæ.*

† These precepts were, 1. The Administration of Justice upon Offenders. 2. Renouncing of Idolatry. 3. Worshipping the true God, and keeping the Sabbath. 4. Abstaining from Murder. 5. From Fornication. 6. From Robbery. 7. From eating of Blood, or any Member of a Beast taken from it alive.

understand the Apostle, when he frequently and earnestly asserts the liberty of believers, and their freedom from the Law: that is, the believing Jews were positively freed from the necessity of observing it; and the believing Gentiles were negatively free from observing it at all.

And, for the farther clearing of this matter, we must know, that, in the very beginning of the Church, there arose great dissension between the believing Jews and the believing Gentiles, concerning the necessity of observing the Levitical Law. For we find, Acts xv. 5, that *certain of the sect of the Pharisees* * *which believed,* affirmed, *That it was needful to circumcise* the Gentiles, *and to command them to keep the Law of Moses:* which yet was greater rigour, than was formerly used to the proselyte party.

To determine this question, the Apostles and Elders meet together in a Council at Jerusalem; where, after some debate, the whole result seems in brief to have been this:—

That the believing Jews might still, without offence, observe the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law. For, though the necessity of them were now abrogated; yet the use of them might, for a season, be lawfully continued: though they were *mortuæ;* yet not *mortiferæ:* "dead" they were; but, hitherto, not "deadly;" they were expired; yet some time was thought expedient for their decent burial. † And, therefore, we find St. Paul himself, who so earnestly in all his Epistles opposeth the observation of the Ceremonial Law; yet he himself submits to the use of those rites, and purifieth himself in the temple according to the Law: Acts xxi. 26; yea, he also circumciseth Timothy, because he was the son of a Jewess: Acts xvi. 3; by which he evidently declares, That those believers, who who were of the nation, though they were freed from the necessity; yet they might lawfully, as yet, observe the Aaronical constitutions: especially, when, to avoid giving of offence, it might be expedient so to do. So tender a thing is the peace of the Church, that even abrogated rites and ceremonies should not be violently rejected, to endanger a wound and schism; and, therefore, much less ought constituted and received rites, in things of less moment

* Among these, Cerinthus was a ringleader; as Epiphanius affirms: Hæres. 13.

† *Cùm venisset fides, quæ, priùs illis observationibus, post mortem et resurrectionem Domini revelata est, amiserant tanquam vitam officii sui. Veruntamen, tanquam defuncta corpora necessariorum officiis deducenda erant quodammodo ad sepulturam; nec simulatè, sed religiosè; non autem deserenda continuò; vel inimicorum obtrectationibus, tanquam canum morsibus, projicienda. Proinde, nunc quisquis Christianorum, quamvis sit ex Judeis, similiter ea celebrare voluerit, non erit pius deductor, vel bajulus corporis, sed impius sepulturæ violator.* Aug. Ep. 19. Hieronym.

than sacrifice and circumcision, be so stiffly and pertinaciously oppugned to the incurable breach and division of the Church.

But then, concerning the Gentiles; although, before the coming of Christ, they might become perfect proselytes to the whole Law of Moses, and receive the seal of circumcision, as many of them did: * yet, after the evangelical doctrine was consummate, and the Apostles sent into all the world to preach it to every creature, they, by the Holy Ghost, determine, in that First Council of the Church, That the Gentiles should by no means be burdened with any of those impositions: but, as they were heretofore by the Jews themselves concluded to be in a safe condition, even as many of them as worshipped the true God, and observed the commandments of Noah; so now the Apostles decree to preserve them in the same liberty: and therefore write unto them, That they should not subject themselves to the dogmatizing commands of false teachers, who required them to be circumcised and to keep the Ceremonial Law; but that, from as many as believed, nothing more was required, than only to abstain *from meat offered to idols; and from blood; and from things strangled; and from fornication*, i. e. as judicious Mr. Hooker very probably interprets it, † from incestuous marriages within prohibited degrees. And all those commands, laid upon them by the Apostles, are the very Precepts of Noah. But circumcision, and other observances of the Ceremonial Law, they were not obliged to: yea, they were obliged not to observe them, ‡ as being subversions of their souls: Acts xv. 24. And therefore we find, that the same holy Apostle, who himself circumcised Thimothy, because he was the son of a Jewess; when he writes to the Gentiles, tells them expressly, that if they be circumcised, Christ shall profit them nothing: Gal. v. 2.

And thus we see, how far and in what sense, the Ceremonial Law is abrogated.

ii. As concerning the JUDICIAL LAW, and those precepts which

* Izates, King of Adiabena: Jos. Ant. xx. 2; although Orosius, l. vii. c. 6, affirms him to have been a Christian; yet, that he was circumcised according to the mind of his first instructor Ananias, the same Josephus witnesseth.

† Eccles. Pol. lib. iv.

‡ The Reason why the Gentiles ought not to observe the Ceremonial Law, even then when the believing Jews might lawfully do it, I suppose was this: That there lying no precedent obligation upon them to do it, as there did upon the Jews, they could have no other motive to persuade them to submit to these observances, unless it were an opinion, that they were necessary in themselves for their justification before God. Which was indeed to evacuate the death of Christ, and overthrow the foundation of the Gospel.

were given to the Jews for the government of their civil state; that law is not at all abrogated.

Not to us: for it was never intended to oblige us. Neither, indeed, is it at all necessary, that the laws of every nation should be conformed to the laws which the Jews lived under; for, doubtless, each state hath its liberty to frame such constitutions, as may best serve to obtain the ends of government: and, therefore, although the punishment of theft were ordained by God himself to be sometimes a double, sometimes a fourfold, sometimes a fivefold restitution; Exod xxii. 1, 4; yet are not our laws to be condemned which ordain the penalty of this transgression to be no less than death; for the reason and necessity of every nation is the best rule and measure, for those laws by which they are to be governed.

Neither is the Judicial Law abrogated to the Jews: for though now, in their scattered state, the laws cease to be of force, because they cease to be a body politic; yet, were their dispersion again collected into one republic, most probably the same national laws would bind them now, as did in former times, when they were a happy and flourishing kingdom.

iii. As concerning the MORAL LAW, of which I am now treating, that is partly abrogated, partly not: abrogated, as to some of its circumstances; but not, as to anything of its substance, authority, and obligation.

1. *The Moral Law is abrogated to believers, as it was a Covenant of Works.* For God in man's first creation, wrote this law in his heart; and added this sanction unto it, If thou dost this, thou shalt live; if not, thou shalt die the death. Now, all mankind sinning in Adam, and thereby contracting an utter impotency of obeying that law, that we might not all perish according to the rigorous sentence of it, God was graciously pleased to enter into another covenant with us; promising a Saviour to repair our lost and decayed condition, and eternal life upon the easier terms of faith and evangelical obedience. Indeed, all those, who either never heard of Jesus Christ, or do reject him, are still under the Law as a covenant; and, therefore, their estate is most wretched and deplorable: for, being transgressors of the Law, there remaineth nothing for them, but a certain fearful looking-for of wrath and fiery indignation to devour them as the adversaries of God. But those who are true believers, are under a better covenant, even the Covenant of Grace; wherein God hath promised unto them eternal life, upon the condition of their faith: and they may, with full assurance of hope, to their unspeakable joy and comfort, expect the performance of it. And, therefore.

2. *To them also the Moral Law is abrogated, as to its condemning power.* Though it sentenceth every sinner to death and curseth every one who continueth not in all things that are written therein to do them: yet, through the intervention of Christ's satisfaction and obedience, the sins of a believer are graciously pardoned; and the venom and malignity of the curse is abolished, it being discharged wholly upon Christ, and received all into his body on the cross: Gal. iii. 13, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;* and, therefore, we may triumphantly exult with the Apostle: Rom. viii. 1, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*

In these two respects, believers are indeed freed from the Moral Law; as it hath the obligation of a covenant, and as it hath a power of condemnation.

3. But, *as it hath a power of obliging the conscience as a standing rule for our obedience, so it remains still in its full vigour and authority.* It still directs us what we ought to do; binds the conscience to the performance of it; brings guilt upon the soul, if we transgress it; and reduces us to the necessity, either of bitter repentance, or of eternal condemnation: for, in this sense *heaven and earth* shall sooner *pass away,* than *one jot or tittle,* shall *pass from the Law.*

And, therefore, the Antinomian is to be abominated, that derogates from the value and validity of the Law: and contends, that it is to all purposes extinct unto believers, even so much as to its preceptive and regulating power; and that no other obligation to duty lies upon them who are in Christ Jesus, but only from the law of gratitude: that God requires not obedience from them, upon so low and sordid an account, as the fear of his wrath and dread severity; but all is to flow only from the principle of love, and the sweet temper of a grateful and ingenuous spirit.

But this is a most pestilent doctrine, which plucks down the fence of the Law, and opens a gap for all manner of licentiousness and libertinism to rush in upon the Christian world; for, seeing that the Moral Law is no other than the Law of Nature written upon man's heart at the first, some positives only being superadded; upon the same account as we are men, upon the same we owe obedience to the dictates of it.

And, indeed, we may find every part of this Law enforced in the Gospel; charged upon us with the same threatenings, and recommended to us by the same promises; and all interpreted to us, by our Saviour himself, to the greatest advantage of strictness and severity. We find the same rules for our actions, the same duties required, the same sins forbidden, in the Gospel, as in the Law.

Only, in the Gospel we have these mitigations, which were not in the Covenant of Works:

(1) That God accepts of our obedience, if it be *sincerè voto et conamine*, "in earnest desires and endeavours." Although we cannot attain that perfect exactness and spotless purity, which the Law requires: yet we are accepted though Christ, according to what we have, and not according to what we have not; if so be we indulge not ourselves in a wilful sloth, and contempt of the Law.

(2) The Gospel admits of repentance, after our falls; and restores us again to the favour of God, upon our true humiliation: but the Law, as a Covenant of Works, left no room for repentance, but required perfect obedience without the least failure; and, in case of non-performance, nothing was to be expected, but the execution of that death which it threatened.

Yet, withal, a higher degree of obedience is now required from us under the dispensations of the Gospel, than was expected under the more obscure and shadowy exhibitions of Gospel-grace by Legal Types and Figures. We confess that the Israelites, before the coming of Christ were no more under a Covenant of Works, than we are now; but yet the Covenant of Grace was more darkly administered unto them: and, therefore, we having now received, both a clearer light to discover what is our duty, and a more plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost to enable us to perform it, and better promises, more express and significative testimonies of God's acceptance, and more full assurance of our own reward: it lies upon us, having all these helps and advantages above them, to endeavour that our holiness and obedience should be much superior to theirs; and that we should serve God with more readiness and alacrity, since now by Jesus Christ our yoke is made easy and our burden light.

So that you see we are far from being dispensed with for our obligation to obedience; but, rather, that obligation is made the stricter by Christ's coming into the world: and every transgression against the Moral Law is enhanced to an excess of sin and guilt, not only by the authority of God's injunction, which still continues inviolable; but likewise from the sanction of our Mediator and Redeemer, who hath invigorated the precepts of the Law by his express command, and promised us the assistance of his Spirit to observe and perform them.

V. Now, here, before I can come particularly to treat of the words of the Decalogue, I think it requisite to propound some

general RULES FOR THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING AND EXPOUNDING OF THE COMMANDMENTS, which will be of great use to us for our right apprehending the full latitude and extent of them.

The Psalmist tells us, That the commandments of God are *exceeding broad:* Ps. cxix. 96. They are exceeding strait, as to any toleration or indulgence given to the unruly lusts and appetites of men; but exceeding broad, in the comprehensiveness of their injunctions, extending their authority over all the actions of our lives.

Now that we may conceive somewhat of this breadth and reach of the Law of God, observe these following Rules.

i. ALL THOSE PRECEPTS, WHICH ARE DISPERSED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, AND CONCERN THE REGULATING OF OUR LIVES AND ACTIONS, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE NOT TO BE FOUND EXPRESSLY MENTIONED IN THE DECALOGUE, YET MAY THEY VERY APTLY BE REDUCED UNDER ONE OF THESE TEN COMMANDS.

There is no duty required nor sin forbidden by God, but it falls under one, at least, of these Ten Words, and sometimes under more than one: and, therefore, to the right and genuine interpretation of this Law, we must take in whatsoever the Prophets, Apostles, or our Lord Christ himself hath taught, as comments and expositions upon it; for the Decalogue is a compendium of all that they have taught concerning moral worship and justice.

Yea, our Saviour doth epitomize this very epitome itself, and reduceth those Ten Words into two: Love to God, which comprehendeth all the Duties of the First Table; and Love to our Neighbour, which comprehendeth all the Duties of the Second Table: and tells us, that *upon these two hang all the Law and the Prophets:* Matt. xxii. 37—41. And, certainly, a due love of God and of our Neighbour, will make us careful to perform all the duties of religion to the one, and of justice to the other; and keep us from attempting any violation to his honour, or violence to their right: and, therefore, the Apostle tells us, that *love is the fulfilling of the Law:* Rom. xiii. 10; and, 1 Tim. i. 5, that *the end of the commandment is Charity,* or Love: the end; i. e, the completion or the consummation of the commandment is love, both to God, and one another. But, concerning this, I shall have occasion to speak more largely hereafter.

ii. Since most of the Commandments are delivered in negative or prohibiting terms, and only the Fourth and Fifth in affirmative or enjoining; we may observe this Rule: that THE AFFIRMATIVE COMMANDS INCLUDE IN THEM THE PROHIBITION OF THE CONTRARY SIN; AND THE NEGATIVE COMMANDS INCLUDE THE INJUNCTION OF THE CONTRARY DUTY.

For it is necessary, that the contrary to what is forbidden must be commanded; and, again the contrary to what is commanded must be forbidden.

As, for instance: God, in the Third Commandment, forbids the taking of his Name in vain: therefore, by consequence, the hallowing and sanctifying his Name is therein commanded. The Fourth requires the sanctifying of the Sabbath-day: therefore, it surely followeth, that the profanation of it is thereby forbidden. The Fifth commands us to honour our parents: therefore, it forbids us to be disobedient or injurious to them. And so it is easy to collect of the rest.

iii. Observe, also, that EVERY NEGATIVE COMMAND BINDS *semper*, and *ad semper*, as the Schools speak: i. e. ALWAYS, AND TO EVERY MOMENT OF TIME: BUT THE AFFIRMATIVE PRECEPTS, THOUGH THEY BIND ALWAYS, YET THEY DO NOT BIND TO EVERY MOMENT: indeed, as to the habit of obedience, they do; but not, as to the acts.* To make this plain by instance.

The First Commandment, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me*, bindeth always, and to every moment of time: so that he is guilty of idolatry, whosoever shall at any time set up any other God to worship, besides the Lord Jehovah. But the Affirmative Precept, which is included in this negative, viz., to worship, to love, to invoke, to depend upon this God, obligeth us always, for we must never act contrary hereunto; and, likewise, it obligeth us to every moment of time, in respect of the habits of divine love, and faith, and worship: yet it doth not oblige us to every moment, in respect of the acts of these habits; for it is impossible to be always actually praying, actually praising, and actually worshipping of God; neither it is required that we should, for this would make one duty shock and interfere with another.

So, likewise, the Fourth Commandment, which is Affirmative, *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-Day*, obligeth always; and whosoever at any time profanes the Sabbath, is guilty of the violation of this law: but it doth not, it cannot oblige to every moment of time; since this day only makes its weekly returns, and every parcel of time is not a Sabbath-Day.

So, likewise, the Fifth Commandment is Positive, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, and binds always; so that we sin, if at any time

* *Licèt Præceptum Affirmativum non obliget ad semper, ita ut semper actu impleatur, vel actu de eo cogitatur, obligat tamen ad semper secundum habitum, ita scil, ut homo semper sit ita dispositus, quòd semper sit paratus implere preceptum quoties occurrit faciendum.* **Durand. lib. ii. dist. 22. quest. 3. lit. m.**

we are refractory and disobedient unto their lawful commands: but it doth not oblige to the acts of honour and reverence in every moment of time, for that is impossible; or, were it not, it would be but mimical and ridiculous.

But now the Negative Precepts oblige us to every moment of time; and, whosoever ceaseth the observation of them for any one moment, is thereby involved in sin, and becomes guilty and a transgressor before God: such are, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: Thou shalt not kill: Thou shalt not steal: Thou shalt not commit adultery, &c.* Now there is no moment of time whatsoever, that can render the non-observation of these commands allowable: nor are there any circumstances, that can excuse it from guilt. Whosoever doth profane the name of God by rash swearing or trivial or impertinent uttering of it, whosoever sheds innocent blood, whosoever purloins from another what is rightly his, whosoever is guilty of any uncleanness; let it be at what time, in what place, after what manner soever, let it be done passionately or deliberately, whether he be tempted to it or not: yet he is a transgressor of the Law, and liable to that curse and death which God hath threatened to inflict upon every soul of man that doth evil. Whereas, in the Affirmative Precepts, there are some times and seasons, to which we are not bound, so as actually to perform the duties enjoined us. This I suppose is clear, and without exception.

iv. Observe this Rule, also: that THE SAME PRECEPT, WHICH FORBIDS THE EXTERNAL AND OUTWARD ACTS OF SIN, FORBIDS LIKEWISE THE INWARD DESIRES AND MOTIONS OF SIN IN THE HEART; AND THE SAME PRECEPT, WHICH REQUIRES THE EXTERNAL ACTS OF DUTY, REQUIRES LIKEWISE THOSE HOLY AFFECTIONS OF THE SOUL, THAT ARE SUITABLE THEREUNTO.

As, for instance: the same Command, that requires me to worship God, exacts from me, not only the outward service of the lip or of the knee, but much more the inward reverence and affection of my soul: that I should prostrate, not my body only, but my very heart at his feet; fearing him as the greatest God, and loving him as the greatest Good, and, with all the tenderness and dearness of an amorous and ravished soul, cleaving unto him and clasping about him as my only joy and happiness. And, therefore those are highly guilty of the violation of this Command, who worship God only with their bodies, when their hearts are far estranged from him; offering up only the shell and husk of a duty, when the pith and substance, which should fill it, is given either to the world or to their lusts: such as these are guilty of idolatry, even in serving

and worshipping the True God; for they set up their idols in their hearts, when they come to enquire of him: as the prophet complains: Ezek. xiv. 7. So, likewise, that Positive Command, *Honour thy father and thy mother,* doth not only require from us the external acts of obedience to all the lawful commands of our parents, and magistrates, and those whom God hath set in authority over us; but requires, farther, an inward love, veneration, and esteem for them in our hearts. For, though men can take no farther cognizance of us, than by our overt-acts; and, if those be regular, they are likewise satisfactory to all human laws: yet this is not sufficient satisfaction to the Law of God, who is the discerner and judge of the heart and soul; and whose law hath this special prerogative above all others, that it can with authority prescribe to our very thoughts, desires, and affections.

And, then, as for Negative Commands, they do not only forbid the external acts of sin, but the inward motions of lust, sinful desires, and evil concupiscence. And thus we find it at large: Matt. v., where our Saviour makes it great part of his most excellent Sermon upon the Mount, to clear and vindicate the Moral Law from the corrupt glosses and interpretations of the Scribes and Pharisees; and to show, that the authority of the Law reached, not only to prohibit sinful actions, as that corrupt generation thought, but sinful affections too: consult verse 21: *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.* Here they stopped, in the very bark and rind of the Command; and thought it no offence, though they suffered their hearts to burn with wrath, and malice, and revenge, so long as they pent it up there, and did not suffer it to break forth into bloody murder. But what saith our Saviour, verse 22? *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.* You see here, that not only the horrid sin of murder is forbidden by the law, but all the incentives to it, and degrees of it; as anger, conceived inwardly in the heart, or expressed outwardly in words.

I cannot pass this place, without giving you some light for the right understanding of it.

Here are three degrees of sin, short of murder: yet all forbidden by the same precept, which forbids that. Causelesss Anger against thy brother; calling him *Raca;* and calling him, *Thou fool:* whereof the one still exceeds the other in guilt. *Raca* signifies a simple

witless fellow, commonly used to upbraid such as were weak and ignorant: Μωρε, or *Thou fool,* signifies one, that is not only ignorant, but wicked and ungodly; as the Scripture frequently useth the word in that sense, which is a far greater reproach, than merely to call him weak or silly. Now, according to these three degrees of sins, our Saviour proportions three degrees of punishment, to be inflicted on those, that are guilty of them, each severer than the other: Causeless Anger shall bring them in danger of the Judgment; *Raca,* in danger of the Council; and *Thou fool,* in danger of Hell-Fire: that is, they shall make them liable to the punishments inflicted by these.

But, to understand the full scope and meaning of our Saviour in these allusions, we must have recourse to the history of the Jewish Commonwealth: and there we find that they had two Courts of Judicature established among them; the lesser and the Greater Sanhedrim.

The Lesser consisted of twenty-three persons; and was erected, not only in Jerusalem, but in every considerable city among the Jews, where there were six-score householders. These had authority to inflict capital punishments upon malefactors: but yet, as the highest crimes fell not under their cognizance, so neither their severest punishments under their award. And this consistory our Saviour calls here the Judgment; and tells us, that whosoever is angry with his brother, without a cause, shall be liable to a punishment correspondent to that, which this Sanhedrim was impowered to inflict; still applying temporals to spirituals, that is, he shall be liable to eternal death, though not so severely executed, as it would be for crimes of a more heinous nature.

Their Greater Sanhedrim was their Supreme Court of Judicature, and consisted of Seventy Elders, besides their chief speaker or moderator. * You will find their first institution to have been by divine authority: Num. xi. 16. They sat only in Jerusalem. Their sentence was decisive and determining; from which there lay no appeal. They were to judge of all harder matters, which could not be determined by other courts: as causes concerning a whole tribe, or the whole nation; causes of war and peace; causes concerning the High-Priest, and the mission and authority of prophets that spake unto them in the Name of the Lord: and this may be the occasion of that speech of our Saviour, *It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem:* Luke xiii. 33; because, in Jerusalem alone, was this Sanhedrim constituted, which was to judge of the prophets,

* Vide Spanhem. Dub. Evang. dub. 139.

whether they were true or false. This Sanhedrim our Saviour here calls the Council. And they had power, not only of life and death, as the other had; but, likewise, of inflicting death in a more severe and tormenting manner than the other: and, therefore, our Saviour saith, Whosoever shall call his brother *Raca*, a vain witless fellow, shall be in danger of the Council. Wherein he still brings the degrees of punishments among the Jews, to allude to the punishment of sins in hell: and so the meaning is, that, as he, who shall causelessly be angry with his brother, exposeth himself to the danger of eternal death; so he, that shall suffer his anger to break forth into any reproachful or reviling language, although his taunts be not very bitter nor biting, only to call him a weak silly person, yet hereby he incurs the danger of a severer sentence, and execution of it upon him for ever.

But, the severest sentence which this Sanhedrim could pronounce, against the greatest malefactors, was that they should be burnt alive with fire. This execution was always performed in the Valley of Hinnom, joining to Jerusalem: which being a place wherein were frequent fires made, both in idolatrous times for the sacrificing of their children to Moloch, and in their purer times for consuming the filth of their city, and that which was as bad, their malefactors; it is not unfrequent in the Scripture to denote Hell by this Tophet, this Valley of Hinnom; which, for its continual fires was a lively type and representation of it: yea, the very Scripture-name for hell, גיהנם, seems to be derived from the Valley of Hinnom. Now, as burning of malefactors in Gehenna, or the Valley of Hinnom, was among the Jews one of their highest and severest punishments, and never inflicted but where the crime was very gross and flagitious: so, saith our Saviour, he, that saith to his brother, Μωρε, *Thou fool*, shall be in danger of Gehenna, of hell-fire, i. e. of a severer punishment in the true hell, than those, who were either causelessly angry, or expressed their anger in more tolerable reproaches: though even they also shall, without repentance, be eternally punished.

So that the sense of our Saviour in all this allusion seems to be this: that, whereas the Scribes and Pharisees had restrained that command, *Thou shalt not kill*, only to actual murder, as if nothing else were forbidden besides open violence and blood; our Saviour, contrary wise, teacheth, that not only that furious and barbarous sin of murder, but also rash and causeless anger, though it only estuate and boil in the heart, much more if it cast forth its foam at the mouth in reviling speeches, falls under that prohibition, *Thou shalt not kill.* All these degrees deserve to be punished with eternal

death: but, as among the Jews, some were punished with lighter, others with more grievous penalties; so shall it be at the Great Judgment: anger in our hearts shall be condemned with eternal punishments; but, if it break forth into reviling expressions, the condemnation shall be more intolerable, and, by so much more, by how much the reproaches are more bitter and sarcastical.

This, in brief, I take to be the true meaning of this difficult speech of our Saviour: the whole scope whereof shows, that, not only the gross acts of sin, but also the inward dispositions and corrupt affections unto sin, and every degree and tendency towards it, are forbidden and threatened by the Holy Law of God.

So, likewise, verse 27 of this Fifth chapter: *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* Here our Saviour brings inward concupiscence to the bar; and makes the heart and eye plead guilty, although possibly shame or fear might restrain the grosser acts of filthiness.

Thus, by these few instances, although many more might be added, I have shown, that the same precept, which forbids the outward acts of sin, forbids likewise the inward desire and motions of sin in the heart.

And, indeed, there is a great deal of reason for it. For God, who is our Lawgiver, is a spirit. He seeth and converseth with our spirits. There is not the least thought that flits in thy soul, not the least shadow of an imagination cast upon thy fancy, not the stillest breathing of desire in the heart, but God is privy to it: he sees to the very bottom of that deep spring and source of thoughts, that is in thy heart: he beholds them, in their causes and occasions; and *knows our thoughts*, as the Psalmist speaks, *afar off:* he beholds our souls more clearly and distinctly, than we can behold one another's faces: and therefore it is but fit and rational, that his laws should reach as far as his knowledge; and that he should prescribe rules to that, whose irregularity he can observe and punish.

Hence it is, that the Apostle, considering what an energy the Law had upon that part of man which seemed most free and untroubled, his mind and spirit, calls it a Spiritual Law: *We know*, saith he, *that the Law is spiritual:* Rom. vii. 14; and that, because the searching and convincing power of it enters into our spirits, cites our thoughts, accuses our desires, condemns our affections; which no other Law in the world, besides this, can do. For how justly ridiculous would those be, that should command us not to think dis-

honourably of them, not to desire anything to their detriment and prejudice; and should threaten us with punishment, in case of disobedience: but the Law of God comes into our consciences, with authority; and, in the name of the great God, requires his peace to be kept among our tumultuous and seditious affections, beats down their carnal weapons, and gives conscience a power either to suppress all rebellious insurrections against the majesty of heaven, or else to indite, accuse, and torment men for them. And, therefore, *the word of God is* by the Apostle said to be quick *and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart:* Heb. iv. 12.

That is therefore, a Fourth Rule for the right understanding of the extent and latitude of the Commands.

v. Another general Rule is this: that THE COMMAND DOTH NOT ONLY FORBID THE SIN THAT IS EXPRESSLY MENTIONED, BUT ALL OCCASIONS AND INDUCEMENTS LEADING UNTO THAT SIN.

And therefore we may observe, that there are many sins, that are not expressly forbidden in any one Commandment, but yet are reductively forbidden in every one, towards the violation of which they may prove occasions. And, as some one sin may be an occasion to all others, so it may be well said to be forbidden in every precept of the Decalogue.

I shall instance only in two of this kind: and they are familiarity with evil persons, or keeping of Evil Company; and that reigning sin of Drunkenness.

For the First of these, it is evident, that, though it be not expressly and *in terminis* forbidden in any one Commandment; yet, as it is a strong temptation and inducement to the violation of each of them, so it is a sin against them all. There are no such sure factors for the Devil as wicked company; who will strive to rub their vices upon as many as they can infect. And, therefore, thou, who delightest in the company either of atheists, or idolaters, or swearers, or sabbath-breakers, or disobedient rebels, or murderers, or whoremongers, or thieves, or perjured persons, or covetous muckworms, thou art guilty of the breach of each of these Commandments: for thou runnest thyself into the very snare of the Devil; and takest the same course to make thyself so, which made them such. And therefore we are all forbidden to keep company with such profane and profligate wretches, by the very same Commandment which forbids their impieties, whatsoever they be.

And as for the second sin I mentioned, Drunkenness, it is now-

a-days grown to such a height of impudence, that it confronts the sun. And, whereas, in the Apostle's days, even among the heathens themselves, shame so far prevailed upon vice and debauchery, that it left sobriety the day, and took only the night to itself: for they, that *would be drunk* were *drunk in the night:* yet, now among us Christians, wickedness is grown so profligate, that we meet the drunkard reeling and staggering even at noon-day, and ready to discharge his vomit in our faces or our bosoms.

Possible, some, who are besotted with this loathsome vice, may think it no great wickedness, because it is not expressly forbidden in the summary of the Law : and so they cry, Peace, peace, to themselves, although they go on to add drunkenness to thirst.

But of this common sin I say, that it is not against any one particular Commandment of the Law, but against all: for since the Moral Law is the law and rule of right reason, the whole of it must needs be broken, when reason itself is perverted by riot and intemperance ; the man turned out of doors and the beast taken in. So that, indeed, drunkenness is not so much any one sin, as it is all. Never were all the Commandments more surely broken, when Moses, cast the Two Tables out of his hands, than they are, in another sense, broken by the drunkard. For he hath put off the man, and hath put on the swine: and into such swine it is, that the Devil enters, as surely as ever he entered into the the herd of the Gadarenes ; and drives them furiously down the precipices of all manner of sins and vices, till at length he plungeth and drowneth them in the lake of fire and brimstone.

And, therefore, whatsoever is commanded, or whatsoever is forbidden, drunkenness is forbidden, as being the greatest advantage that the Devil hath to prompt men to those abominations, that, were they in their right senses, they would abhor and detest. Is he, think you, fit to worship God, and to take him for his own God, who is not himself his own man ? Is not he guilty of idolatry, who makes Bacchus his deity ; giving him the libations of his vomits, and falling prostrate before him ? Can he forbear taking the Name of God in vain, who hath taken the creatures of God to his bane? whose tongue is set afloat with his excessive cups, and whose mouth the Devil taps to let his blasphemies, and oaths, and curses, and fearful execrations run out the more fluently ? Can he keep holy the Sabbath-Day, whose last night's drunkenness and excess rocks him asleep, either in his own house, or in the house of God ? Is he fit to honour his parents, who dishonoureth his own body ? Can he abstain from murder, who first takes the ready way to destroy his own body, and damn his

own soul; and then, through the rage of wine, is ready upon every slight provocation to mingle his vomit with the blood of others? Can he keep himself from filthy uncleanness, whose riotous table doth but prepare him for a polluted bed? Shall not he assever that which is false, whose reason is so blinded by the fumes of his intemperance, that he knows no longer the difference between truth and falsehood? And, finally, what bounds can be set to his concupiscence, who, by thus blinding the eyes of his reason, hath only left him fancy and appetite, both which the Devil rules and governs?

Thus you see there are some sins, which, though they are not expressly forbidden in the Decalogue, yet are virtually and reductively forbidden, as being the foams and the occasions of others; and, among these, drunkenness especially, which strikes at every law that God hath enjoined us, the guilt whereof is universal, as as well as the sin epidemical.

vi. Another Rule for the understanding of the Decalogue is this: that THE COMMANDS OF THE FIRST TABLE ARE NOT TO BE KEPT FOR THE SAKE OF THE SECOND; BUT THE COMMANDS OF THE SECOND ARE TO BE KEPT FOR THE SAKE OF THE FIRST.

The First Table commands us those duties, which immediately respect the service and worship of God; the Second those, which respect our demeanour towards men. Now the worship and service of God is not to be performed out of respect to men: but our duty towards men is to be observed out of respect to God. For he, that worships God that he might thereby recommend himself to men, is but a hypocrite and formalist; and he, that performs his duty towards men without respecting God in it, is but a mere civil moralist. The First Table commands us not to worship idols; not to swear: not to profane the Sabbath: the laws of the magistrate command the very same; and those, who are guilty of the breach of them are liable to human punishments: but, if we therefore abstain from these sins, because they will expose us to shame or suffering among men; if therefore only we worship God, that men may respect and venerate us; all the pomp and ostentation of our religion is but hypocrisy, and, as such, shall have its reward: for God requireth to be served, not for man's sake, but for his own.

The Second Table prescribes the right ordering of our conversation towards men; that we should be dutiful and obedient to our superiors; loving and kind to our equals; charitable and beneficial to our inferiors; and just and righteous towards all. These duties are not to be done only for man's sake, but for God's: and those, who perform them without respecting him in them, lose both their

acceptance and reward. And therefore our Saviour condemns that love and beneficence, which proceeds merely upon human and prudential accounts: Matt. v. 46, *If ye love them* only *which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?* And, Luke vi. 33, 34, *If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.*

But we ought not therefore to serve God for man's sake: but we ought to love man for God's sake: and to perform the duties of the Second Table out of conscience and respect to God: and that respect is Threefold:

1. *Obedience to his authority:* for, then, what we do for men is an acceptable work and service, when we do it out of a sincere principle of obeying the will and command of God.

2. *Conformity unto his example:* and this our Saviour urgeth, Matt. v. 45, *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

3. *A comfortable hope and expectation of his eternal reward:* Luke vi. 35, *Love ye your enemies, and do good....and your reward shall be great.*

This is the way to exalt morality to be truly divine, and to make whatsoever we do towards men, to be an acceptable service unto God. By this means, we interest him in all the acts of our charity, our justice, and temperance; and we may be assured, that what we thus do for his sake, shall, in the end, be rewarded by his bounty.

vii. Another Rule is this: that THE COMMANDS OF THE FIRST TABLE, SO FAR FORTH AS THEY ARE PURELY MORAL, SUPERSEDE OUR OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDS OF THE SECOND TABLE, WHEN THEY ARE NOT BOTH CONSISTENT.

As, for instance: we are, in the Second Table, required to obey our parents, and to maintain and preserve our own lives: yet, if we are brought into such circumstances, as that we must necessarily disobey either God or them, either prostitute our soul to guilt or our lives to execution, in such a case our Saviour hath instructed us, Luke xiv. 26, *If any one man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children....yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* Indeed, a positive hatred of these is unnatural and impious; but the hatred, which our Saviour here intends, is comparative: *i. e.* a loving them less than Christ, than religion and piety. And if the commands of the one or the concerns of the

other are, at any time, to be violated or neglected, it must only be when we are sure that they are incompatible with a good conscience and true godliness.

viii. Again, in the Eighth place, Whereas in the First Table, there is one command partly moral and natural, partly positive and instituted, and that is, our observation of the Sabbath: we may observe, that OUR OBLIGATION TO THE DUTIES OF THE SECOND TABLE DOTH OFTENTIMES SUPERSEDE OUR OBEDIENCE UNTO THAT COMMAND OF THE FIRST TABLE.

It frequently happens, that works of necessity and mercy will not permit us to be employed in the works of piety; nor to sanctify the Sabbath after such a manner, as else we ought: for the Lord requireth mercy, rather than sacrifice: Hosea vi. 6. And this our Saviour allegeth: Matt. ix. 13. In which sense it holds true, that *The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:* Mark ii. 27. Whatsoever, therefore, is a work of necessity, or a work of charity and mercy, and that not only towards man, but even towards brute beasts themselves, may lawfully be done on the Sabbath-Day, without bringing upon us the guilt of profanation; for that, which is purely moral in the Second Table, doth in a sort derogate from what is but positive and instituted in the First.

ix. A Ninth Rule is this: WHATSOEVER IS FORBIDDEN IN ANY COMMAND, BOTH ALL THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF IT, AND LIKEWISE ALL THE EFFECTS AND CONSEQUENTS OF IT, ARE FORBIDDEN IN THE SAME.

Thus, under the prohibition of idolatry, falls the prohibition of the feasting in the idol-temples, and eating meats sacrificed to them, as being too evident a sign and token of our communion with them.

So, in the same command wherein pride is forbidden, (which is chiefly the first and second, for a proud man sets up himself for his God, is his own idol, and is his own idolater,) in the same are forbidden all the signs and effects of pride; as a lofty look, and a mincing gait, an affected behaviour, and vain fantastic apparel: against which the Prophet largely declaims, Isa. iii., the 16th to the end: because, although pride doth not formally consist in these things, yet they are signs and effects of pride; and contrary unto that modesty and decency, which God requires.

x. The Tenth and last Rule is this: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE COMMANDS IS SO CLOSE AND INTIMATE, AND THEY ARE SO LINKED TOGETHER, THAT WHOSOEVER BREAKETH ONE OF THEM IS GUILTY OF ALL.

Now that bond, which runs through them and knits them thus to-

gether, is the authority and sovereignty of God enjoining their observance: so that whosoever fails in his due obedience to any one, doth virtually and interpretatively transgress them all.

Thus we find it expressly affirmed: James ii. 10, *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* Not as though the violation of one precept were actually the violation of another; for many may steal, and yet not actually murder; many again may murder, and yet not actually commit adultery: but this place of the Apostle must be understood of violating that authority, which passeth through them all, and by which all the Commandments have their sanction. For since the authority of the Great God is one and the same in all these laws, he, that shall so far disrespect this authority, as wilfully to break one of them, evidently declares, that he owns it not in any. And, although other considerations may restrain such an one from those crimes which are forbidden by some Commandments; yet his observance of them is no part of obedience, nor can it be interpreted to be performed out of conscience and respect towards God: for were it so, the same authority, which withheld him from murder, or theft, or adultery, would likewise restrain him from lying, or taking the name of God in vain: and he, that is guilty of these offences, is likewise guilty of all; because the same authority is stamped upon them all alike, and is alike violated in the transgression of each. And this very reason the Apostle subjoins to his assertion: verse 11, *He, that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law:* yea, of the whole Law, as breaking that fence, which God had set about his law, even his sovereign and absolute authority.

These are the Rules, which may direct your understandings to a right knowledge of the latitude and comprehensiveness of the Law. As for the application of them to particular cases, I must leave that to the judgment of Christian Prudence; only, in the ensuing Treatise, you will meet with sundry examples of it.

VI. It will be now requisite that I speak something, and that chiefly because others have spoken so much, concerning the ORDER of these Commands.

The number of them is no way questioned, for God himself hath determined them to be *Ten Commandments:* Exod. xxxiv. 28; but the method and disposition of them is much controverted: and I think with more heat and contention than the cause deserves; for, if all that God hath spoken be entirely delivered to us, what great

concern is it, whether this or that Command be reckoned the Second, Third, or Fourth? This certainly tends but little to piety; and we had need rather to employ our care how to keep them, than how to reckon them.

And, therefore waving all other differences, (as that of Hesychius, making the First Command to be this, *I am the Lord thy God;** which we, with good reason, affirm to be only a part of the Preface: and leaving out the Fourth, concerning the sanctification of the Sabbath: and that of the Seventh, placing, *Thou shalt not kill*, after, *Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal:* whereas we, according to the Hebrew Verity, place it before:) all that I shall remark, is, the difference between the Papists and us in the enumeration of the Ten Commandments.

They generally hold, that there are but Three Commands in the First Table; and therefore make Seven in the Second: and, to complete this number, as they join the First and the Second into one, so they divide the Tenth into Two.

Concerning this division or union, we would not be much contentious with them, were there not a sacrilegious and idolatrous design couched under it; for finding the Second Commandment to strike directly at their image worship, they thought it expedient to deny it to be any distinct precept of itself; but only an appendix or exposition of the former, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me:* that so they might, with the better colour, omit it; as generally they have done, in all their books of devotion, and for instruction of the people. So that, of those few among them that can rehearse the Decalogue, you shall find none that will repeat, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them;* as not knowing that any such thing is forbidden them by God. And, yet, that they may make up the full number of the Commandments, they divide the Tenth into two; one, forbidding the coveting of our neighbour's wife; and the other, the coveting of any other of his possessions.

The only authority they produce from Antiquity, for this order of the Decalogue, is that of St. Austin: and, it is very true, that he doth, in many places of his Works, so conjoin and divide them:† but far from any design of promoting idolatry; or keeping the people in ignorance, that the worshipping of images was forbidden. Yet, in this particular, he went contrary to the current of all former

* Thom. Aquinas. 1. 2. q. 100. Art. 4.

† Aug. Ep. 209. ad Januar. Sermon 148. de tempore. Lib. 15. contra Faust Manich. Tract. 3. in Johan.

Antiquity; yea, contrary to the very order of the Scripture: for whereas they say that the Ninth Commandment is, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife;* and the Tenth, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor his servant,* &c., if we consult Exod. xx. 17, we shall find that the Command runs thus: *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, &c.,* from which it certainly follows, that they cannot make two precepts but appertain to one.

But enough of this: which I had not mentioned, had it not been conceived out of such an impious design.

And now I think my way is clear to the words themselves. In them we have the PREFACE, and the PRECEPTS.

1, The PREFACE in these words; I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

This Preface carries an equal respect and reverence to all the Commandments; and contains a strong argument in it to enforce the obedience of them.

And as kings and princes do usually prefix their names and titles before those laws and edicts which are set forth by them, to gain the more attention and the greater veneration to what they publish; so, here the great God, who is the King of kings, being to proclaim a law to his people of Israel, that he might affect them with the deeper reverence of his authority, and make them the more afraid to transgress those laws that were enacted by so mighty a potentate and so glorious a majesty, he displays and blazons his name and his style before them: *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage:* that they might learn to fear his *glorious and fearful name,* THE LORD THY GOD: as we find it, Deut. xxviii. 58.

Now, as all arguments, that are prevalent and cogent, are adapted to work upon one of these two passions by which we are swayed in all the actions of our lives, either our fear or our love; so here, likewise, God hath accommodated himself to our temper, and proclaims,

i. His AUTHORITY, to beget FEAR: *I am the Lord thy God.*

ii. His BENEFITS and MERCIES to engage LOVE: *The Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egyyt, out of the house of bondage.*

And both these, that, having so strong an obligation upon our very natures, as the motives of love and fear, he might the more readily work us into obedience. For what motives can be urged

more enforcing than these, which are drawn both from power and goodness: the one, obliging us to subjection; the other to gratitude?

i. He is the Lord God, the great Creator, the only Proprietor, the absolute Governor and Disposer of All things; and, therefore, upon this account, WE OWE AN AWFUL OBSERVANCE TO ALL HIS LAWS AND INJUNCTIONS. It is but fit and just, that we should be subject unto him, that created us; and who hath infinite power, for our contumacies and rebellions eternally to destroy us.

He is the Lord God; the Great and Glorious One, whose kingdom is from everlasting to everlasting, and whose dominion hath no bounds, either of time or place. *Behold,* saith the Prophet, *the nations are* but *as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity:* Isa. xl. 15, 17. His voice shakes the heavens, and removes the earth out of its place. His way is in the whirlwind. Storms and tempests are his harbingers; and the clouds are the dust raised by his feet. The mountains quake at his presence; at his displeasure the hills melt away; the world and all the inhabitants of it are dissolved. His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. His hand spans the heavens, and he holds all the waters of the sea in the hollow of it. Heaven is the throne of his glory, and the earth his foot-stool: his pavilion round about him, dark waters and thick clouds of the sky. Ten thousand times ten thousand glorious spirits stand alway ministering before him: they fly on his errands, and are ready pressed to execute his sovereign will and pleasure. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in* thy *praises, doing wonders?* and therefore, *who would not fear thee, O King of Nations: and tremble and be astonished, when once thou art angry?*

Wilt thou then, O vile and wretched Sinner, despise the authority and majesty of the great God, before whom all the powers of heaven and earth lie prostrate? Darest thou infringe his laws and violate his commands, who is so great and terrible a God, that he can destroy thee by the very breath of his nostrils? *By the breath of his nostrils are they consumed:* Job iv. 9. Yea, he can look thee to death: *They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance:* Ps. lxxx. 16. Art thou able to contend with this God? Art thou a fit match for the Almighty? can thy heart endure, or thy hands be strong, in the day when the Lord shall deal with thee, and come to recompense vengeance upon thee for all thy transgressions? Who, among you, can dwell with the devouring fire? who, among you, can dwell with everlasting burnings?

Certainly, did we but frequently thus over-awe our hearts with the serious consideration of the dread majesty and supreme authority of the Great God, we should not dare so presumptuously to provoke him, as we do. Fear is a most excellent preservative from sin; and a strong fence that God hath set about his Law, to keep us from breaking those bounds which he hath prescribed us. And, therefore, the Wise Man gives us this advice: Eccl. xii. 13, *Fear God and keep his commandments:* and the Psalmist: Ps. iv. 4, *Stand in awe and sin not.*

ii. As the authority of God is set forth to move us to obedience by working upon our fear; so his BENEFITS AND MERCIES ARE DECLARED TO WIN US TO IT FROM A PRINCIPLE OF LOVE AND GRATITUDE: *The Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

And indeed this, though it be a soft, yet it is a most powerful and effectual argument.

Hath God surrounded thee with blessings, and loaded thee every day with his benefits? Hast thou received thy life, thy being from him; and so many comforts in which thou takest delight, and he allows thee so to do? Hast thou been delivered by his watchful providence from many deaths and dangers; restored from sickness, or preserved in health? Doth he feed thee at his table, and clothe thee out of his wardrobe? Nay, what is infinitely more, hath he given thee his only Son, and his Son given thee his life and most precious blood? Hath he sent thee his Gospel; and, in it, the exceeding great and precious promises of eternal glory, a glory which hope durst not be bold enough to expect, nor is imagination large enough to conceive? Hath he sent thee his Spirit to seal and ratify all these promises to thee? Hath he crowned thy head with many rich blessings here, and will he crown it with joy and blessedness hereafter? And canst thou, O Soul, be so unkind and disingenuous as to deny anything to that God, who hath denied nothing to thee? Canst thou refuse him the only thing he requires of thee; the only testimony which thou canst give, that thou hast any sense of his favour? and, especially considering he requires it, only that he may reward it with farther blessings. Canst thou wrong that God, who hath been so kind and gracious unto thee, and is continually doing thee good? Canst thou despise his precepts, who hath regarded thy prayers? Wilt not thou hear him speaking unto thee, who hath often heard thee when thou hast cried unto him, and hath helped and saved thee? Certainly, the ingenuity of human nature forbids it: the love of God constraineth otherwise; especially, since he hath

required obedience from us as the evidence and expression of our love to him: John xiv. 21, *He, that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:* and, in the second epistle of St. John v. 6, *This is love, that we walk after his commandments.* And that, which is a most cogent motive, thine own interest and eternal concernments engage thee to it: for, *what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God.... and to love him.... and to keep* his *commandments .... which I command thee this day for thy good?* Deut. x. 12, 13. God might have required from us the very same obedience which now he doth, without promising us any reward for it: for we owe him all that we can possibly do, as he is the author of our beings; and every power and faculty of our souls ought to be employed for him, who gave them unto us. But, when the Great God hath been so far pleased to condescend from his prerogative, as to command us nothing but what hath already brought us very great advantages, and will for the future bring us far greater, when his hands shall be as full of blessings, as his mouth is of commands; when he enjoins us a work that in itself is wages, and yet promiseth us wages for doing of that work; when the mercies he hath already given us do oblige us, and the mercies he hath promised yet to give us do allure us: certainly, we must needs be the most disingenuous of all creatures, and the greatest enemies to our own happiness, if these considerations do not win us to yield him that obedience, which redounds not at all to his profit and advantage, but to our own.

Thus you see how God hath enforced the observation of his Law upon us, both by his authority and by his mercy: the one, to work upon our fear; the other, upon our love; and both to engage us to obedience.

Now here it is observable, that, in the rehearsal of those mercies which should oblige unto duty, mention is made only of those, which seem to concern the Israelites, and no other people: *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* From which some would infer, that the Decalogue only respects them; and that the commands then given do not at all appertain unto us, no more than the benefits commemorated.

But the answer is easy. For this mercy here mentioned, of deliverance from Egypt and the house of bondage, is to be understood either literally or typically.

If we understand it Literally, so indeed it refers only to the people of Israel, whom God brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm; and by such a series of miracles, that

they were almost as ordinary as the common effects of God's Providence.

But if we understand this Typically and Mystically, so it is true, that God hath brought us also out of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage: and therefore the enforcement of the Commandments, upon this account and consideration, belongs to us Christians, as well as it did belong to the Church of the Jews; for, should we run up the allegory to the spiritual sense of it, we shall find a wonderful agreement betwixt them, and a near representation of our state in the state of the Israelites. Let it suffice to compare them together, only in a few remarkable instances. As they were kept in bondage under the rigorous tyranny of Pharaoh, who sought both by policy and power to destroy them: so were we kept in bondage under the tyranny of the Devil, of whom Pharaoh was a black type and shadow. And, as God delivered them from his hand by a temporal salvation: so hath he delivered us from the power of the Devil by a spiritual salvation; redeeming us from the slavish employment of lading ourselves with thick clay, and leading us through the Red Sea of his Son's blood, in which all our spiritual enemies are destroyed; and conducting us through the wilderness of this world, unto the promised Canaan, that land that floweth with milk and honey, the seat of rest and eternal joy and felicity, even heaven itself: and, therefore, if the consideration of a temporal deliverance were so powerful a motive to engage the Israelites unto obedience, how much more effectually should we be obliged unto it, whose deliverance is far greater than theirs was; for God *hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:* Col. i. 13. He *hath delivered us from the wrath to come:* 1 Thess. i. 10. He *hath abolished death* for us, *and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:* 2 Tim. i. 10. And, therefore, as our deliverance is spiritual, so ought our obedience to be; that being delivered from the justice of God, the condemning power of the Law, the reigning power of sin, the sting of an accusing conscience, the rage and malice of the Devil, and the intolerable torments of Hell, we might, with all love and thankfulness, cheerfully serve that God, whose mercy hath been extended towards us in those things, which are of highest and most precious concernment.

And thus you see the reason of this Preface, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt*; and how it is both applicable and obligatory to us Christians, as well as to the Jews: containing a declaration of God's authority to enforce, and of his mercy to oblige us to the obedience of, those laws, which he delivers.

II. I come now to the PRECEPTS themselves; whereof the first and chiefest is, Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

Which because it is negative, and all negatives depend upon and must be measured by the truth of their contrary affirmative, therefore I shall first consider what duties are commanded in this precept; and then, what sins are prohibited.

i. Four things are here REQUIRED.

First. That *we must have a God:* against Atheism.

Secondly. That *we must have the Lord Jehovah for our God:* which forbids Idolatry.

Thirdly. That *we must have the only true God the Lord Jehovah alone for our God.* And this forbids Polytheism, or the worshipping of many Gods; and Samaritanism, or the worshipping of false Gods together with the true, like those Samaritans spoken of, 2 Kings xvii. 33, who feared the Lord, and yet served their own Gods; making a strange medley in religion, and blending those things together that were utterly irreconcilable: as if they intended not only to be partakers themselves with Devils, but to make God so too; which is the greatest gratification that can be given to that proud and wicked spirit, whose ambition it is to emulate and rival God in worship. The Apostle hath told us, *That* those *things, which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to Devils, and not to God:* 1 Cor. x. 20. Now, thus to join any other thing with God as the object of our worship, is infinitely to debase and disparage him; since it intimates, that something, besides God, is excellent, and perfect as himself. And, therefore, Zephan. i. 5, God severely threatens to cut off and to destroy those, *that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham.*

Fourthly. It requires that *all these services and acts of worship, which we tender unto the true and only God, be performed with sincerity and true devotion.* This is implied in that expression *before me:* THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME, or in my sight.

And this forbids both Profaneness on the one hand, and Hypocrisy on the other. For, because the most secret and retired apartments of the heart are all naked and bare in the sight of God, and our very spirits are as it were dissected, and so exposed to his view and observation; therefore to have no other God before him, denotes that our serving and worshipping of him ought to be sincere and affectionate.

It is not enough, to have no other God before men; not to fall down prostrate before any visible idol set up in a temple: but the Law is spiritual, and searcheth the very thoughts and inward parts

of the soul: and if there be any idol set up in the heart, although it be in the darkest corner of it; any secret lust or hidden sin, which is the soul's idol, and keeps it from being chaste and true to its God; any crooked ends and sinister respects, in the worship of God; this is to have another God, in the sight of Jehovah, and before him.

Indeed, we are very apt to rest contented, if we can but approve ourselves before men, and carry a fair show of religion and godliness.

But consider how weak and foolish this is: for, first, we cozen them with our appearances; and, then, we cozen ourselves with their opinions of us. It is not only before men, whose sight is terminated in the bark and outside of things, that we offer up our services;; but before that God, who is the Searcher of the Heart and the Trier of the Reins, who looks quite through us, and judgeth not according to outward appearance, but judgeth righteous judgment. For us to regard men, and seek to commend ourselves to them in the service of God, is as great a folly and irreverence, as it would be for one, who is to treat with a mighty prince, to regard and reverence only the images in the tapestry and hangings. Alas! men are but as so many blind images, in respect of God: they cannot see the heart, nor the affections; and those outward acts of worship, which they do see and commend without the heart, are despised by God. He requireth truth in the inward parts; and is not delighted with the ostentation of performance, but with the sincerity of intention: for every one is delighted with that, which doth most of all declare some singular excellency that is in him. But, it is God's excellency and prerogative, to contemplate the heart, to weigh and consider the spirits of men: and, therefore, he is chiefly delighted in the unfeigned desires and breathings of the heart after him; because, by these, we own him to be an all-knowing God. But when we perform duties of religion only to be seen and applauded of men, we make God only our pretence, but men our idols; and set up as many Gods before him, as we have spectators and observers.

And thus we have seen what positive duties are required of us in this precept: That we should worship a God, and him the true God; and the true God only, and that in truth and sincerity, as doing all our services before him. So that you see this First Command respects WORSHIP.

It would be too long, and indeed almost endless, to insist particularly on all the duties that are included in the true and sincere worship of the true and only God. I shall, therefore, speak only of the THREE CHIEF AND MOST REMARKABLE.

1. The Love of God. 2. The Fear of God. 3. Invocation of, and rendering praise unto him. In these three, especially, doth consist the having the Lord for our God.

1. In this command is required of us, *the most supreme and endeared love of God.*

Yea, indeed, the Love of God is not only the sum of this, but of all the commands of the First Table: and, therefore, as I lately told you, when our Saviour would give an abridgement of the Law, he compriseth all the Ten under Two Great Commands: Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39. THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND. *This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it,* THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF. From whence the Apostle deduceth that great conclusion: Rom. xiii. 10, that *Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* It is so; if not formally, yet virtually and effectually: for it will powerfully and sweetly sway us to yield a ready submission and obedience to what is required of us; and that, not only as it is the dictate of divine and sovereign authority, but from the free spontaneous tendency of the soul itself: which, when it is once touched with this celestial and serene flame, must rebel against its own inclinations, as well as against God's commands, if it be not carried out towards that object, in which alone it can find full acquiescence and satisfaction.

This Love of God hath in it Three Acts or Degrees; Desire, Joy, and Zeal:

(1) An earnest and panting Desire after God: Ps. xlii. 1, 2, *As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God*: oh, *when shall I come and appear before God?* As the poor imbosked deer, that is closely pursued, faints and melts with the heat of the chase; and hasteth to the known river where it was wont to quench its thirst, to find both safety and refreshment there: so doth the holy amorous soul reach and breathe after God. He thirsteth after the *water-brooks,* the streams of his ordinances, wherein God doth pour out his grace and his Spirit to refresh the longing desires of his holy impatience: but, not being satisfied with this, he still makes up to the fountain; and never rests contented, till he hath engulphed and plunged himself into God, and is swallowed up in beatitude.

(2.) From the fruition of the beloved object springeth Joy.

For Joy is nothing else, but the rest and acquiescence of desire. And, therefore, according to the measures of God's communicating himself to our souls; such, proportionably, will be the increases of

our joy. Something we enjoy of God in this life, whilst we are absent from him in the body: he is pleased to give us transient glances of himself, when he fills his ordinances and our duties with his Spirit: and, yet, these reserved communications are so ravishing, that the distended soul is often forced, by the agony of sweetness, to cry out, with holy Simeon, *Now, Lord,* let *thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* How overflowing then will our joy be, when we come to heaven, where our fruition of God shall be entire and eternal! where we shall see him as he is, and know him as we are known by him! where the unveiled glories of the Deity shall beat full upon us; and we, for ever, sun ourselves in the smiles of God! certainly, the joy of such a state would be intolerable; but, only, that God, who fills us, will then likewise enlarge and support us.

(3.) If our fruition of God be hindered and obstructed, our love to him will then express itself in a holy Zeal.

Zeal is the indignation of the soul; and a revenge, that it takes upon whatsoever is an impediment to the obtaining of its desires. The earnest desire of a true Saint, is the enjoyment of God, and the glory of God; and, of both these, sin is the only let and hindrance. And, therefore, a soul, that is passionate for God, hath not so great an indignation against anything, as against sin. Can he endure to see that God, whom he loves dearer than his life, daily provoked and injured? to hear his name blasphemed; to see his ordinances despised, his worship neglected, his servants abused, and the most sacred truths of religion denied, and the sacred mysteries of it derided? He is the most meek and patient man on earth, in his own concerns; unwilling to observe the wrongs that are done him, and much more to revenge them: but when God is injured, the dear object of his love and joy, he can no longer refrain; but, whatsoever befall him, riseth up to vindicate his honour, and thrusts himself between to receive those strokes which were aimed at God; and what he cannot prevent or reform, that he bitterly bewails.

This is true Zeal; and he, that saith he loves God, and yet is not thus zealous for him, is a liar.

Now try your Love to God by these things. Are your desires fervent and affectionate after him? Do you find a holy impatience in your spirit till you enjoy him? Will nothing else content you, but God? Can you say, that there is none in heaven nor in earth, that you desire in comparison with him; and, if the whole world were thrown into your bosoms for your portion, you would pluck it thence, and cast it at your feet, resolving that you will not be

put off with such trifles? Do you find a Joy springing and diffusing itself through your hearts, when you are engaged in communion with him? a sweet and potent delight, to which all the pleasures of sin are but flat and insipid? Are you Jealous for the Lord of Hosts? Are your anger and grief never so much kindled for any wrongs that are done unto you, as they are for the provocations that are daily committed against the great Majesty of Heaven? Canst thou mourn and weep for these in secret; and, if thou hast power and authority to do it, punish and avenge them openly?—Thou mayest, for thy comfort, conclude, that certainly God hath kindled this heavenly flame of Love in thy breast: a flame, that aspires heaven-ward; and will, at last, carry up thy soul with it, and lodge it there where the Desire of Love shall be satisfied, the Joy of Love perfected, and the Zeal of Love eternally rewarded.

So much for the First principal Duty required in this First Precept, the Love of God.

2. In this Command is required of us *the Fear of God.*

For, certainly, we cannot have the Lord for our God, unless we supremely fear and reverence him. Yea, as love, so the fear of God is made the sum of all the Commandments, and indeed the substance of all religion: for, although it be but one particular branch and member of that worship and service, which we owe unto God; yet it is such a remarkable one, and hath such a mighty influence upon all the rest, that, oftentimes, in Scripture it is put for the whole; and, generally, the character of a true worshipper and obedient servant of God, is given by this Periphrasis, that he is a man fearing God.

Now the Fear of God is either Servile or Filial; and both are a strong bond to duty and obedience.

Those, who are actuated only by a slavish fear, will beware how they stir up the dread wrath and severe justice of God against themselves, by any wilful neglects or known transgressions.

And how much more those, who are actuated by a principle of Filial and Reverential Fear of God; who fear as much to offend, as to suffer for it; and to whom mercy and goodness prove as powerful motives of fear, as wrath and fury! Yea, there is no attribute nor perfection in God, but is very justly the object of our fear: for where this grace is true and genuine, it works in us rather a sedate awe and respect of God, a profound reverence and resilition of the Soul, * than any turbulent and tempestuous passions of affright and horror. And, certainly, if we acknowledge that there is a God, it

* *Timor reverentiæ est resilitio ab altitudine Dei ad vitam propriam.* **Altisiod. l. x. Tract. 5.**

is but reason that we should thus fear him according to his essential greatness and glory: for, take away the fear of a Deity, and a supreme power, which is able to reward and punish the actions of men, and you open a floodgate for all villainy and wickedness to rush out and overflow the whole world. And, where this restraint of fear is taken off from the spirits of men, all laws given to curb their licentiousness are of no more force, than fetters of air to chain up madmen: and, therefore, very fitly doth God enjoin the fear of himself, in this First Command; as that, which will season and dispose the heart to obey him, in all the rest.

3. Another principal part of worship required in this First Precept, is, *the Invocation of the Name of God in our Prayers and Praises.*

The two former, viz., love and fear, respect the inward worship of God in our hearts: but this appertains to his outward worship; and, by it, we give express testimonies that we both love and fear him. For prayers and praises are the tribute and homage of religion: by the one, we acknowledge our dependence upon him; by the other, we own all our blessing and comforts to be from him; and to one of these two, all external worship may be referred. Certainly, such, as neither pray unto God nor praise him, cannot be said to have a God: for they acknowledge none; but are Gods unto themselves. For wherefore do we affirm, that there is a God, if we make no addresses unto him? If we have recourse only to our own power or policy to accomplish our designs: and, when they succeed, ascribe the success of them only to our own wisdom and conduct; we make these our idols, and give them the honour which is due unto God only. And, therefore, the Prophet Habak. i. 16, speaks of those, who *sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.*

Now, as the love and fear of God are often used in Scripture, for his whole worship and service; so, likewise, is this Invocation of his Name. So we find it, Gen. iv. 26, *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord:* that is, (as many learned expositors understand it, although some take it another way) then began men solemnly and publicly to worship God in their assemblies. And, Jer. x. 25, *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and on the families that call not on thy name:* i. e. those, who do not worship nor serve thee. And the like we may observe in very many other places.

There is but one thing more that I shall remark to you; and that is, that, as this First Command requires, in the general, that the True God should be truly worshipped: so the three next following

Commands prescribe the means and branches of his worship, and the way and manner how he would have it performed. For the Second Commandment requires us to worship God, who is a spirit, without any visible image or representation of the Deity: for, as it is impossible that there should be any true resemblance made of a spirit; so it is most impious to give any part of divine honour and reverence unto dumb idols: which, as to their materials, are but the creatures of God; as they are statues, but the creatures of art; and, as they are images, but the creatures of fancy and superstition. The Third Commandment requires, that we should never mention the name of the Great God slightly and impertinently; but, whensoever we have occasion to utter it, we should do it with all prostrate veneration and serious affection. The Fourth prescribes to us the time, which God hath set apart and sanctified for his solemn worship. So that you see each Command of the First Table is concerned in giving Rules of Divine Worship; but the first, which enjoins it in the general, is the ground and foundation of the other three.

And thus much shall suffice concerning the duties required in this First Command, THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.

ii. In the next place, let us see what is FORBIDDEN in it. It forbids us Four things: Atheism, or the belief and acknowledgment of no God. Ignorance of the True God. Profaneness, or the wretched neglect of the worship and service of God. Idolatry, or the setting up and worshipping of false gods.

1. *Atheism*, or the acknowledging of no god, is forbidden and condemned by this command.

And well may this be reckoned the first sin forbidden; for, certainly, religion and worship will be found to be one of the most foppish vanities, that ever was imposed upon the credulous world; if either there be no God, to whom we might direct our devotions; or only a god of Epicurus's and Lucretius's stamp, that sits unconcerned in heaven, and loaths the fatigue of business, taking no thought nor care of human affairs. For if there be no god, or only such an one, what difference is there whether we pray or blaspheme? whether we lead holy and pious lives; or let loose the reins to all manner of lewdness and riot, and wallow in all the impure delights that vice and sensuality can recommend to our corrupted appetites? for, if there be no God, there can be no future cognizance taken of either, no rewards nor punishments proportioned to either. And, therefore, it will be here necessary to show the folly and unreasonableness of atheism; and to convince men that there is a God, without which all religion and worship are but folly and madness.

Some, perhaps, may judge it altogether needless to insist upon

such a subject as this, among those who all acknowledge and worship the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

I heartily wish it were both unnecessary and impertinent; but, truly, if we consider that usually the practices of men are guided and influenced by their principles, we shall find reason enough to suspect that there are some notions of Speculative Atheism that lie at the bottom of all that Practical Atheism, which we may observe so generally to prevail in the world: for any considerate person would think it impossible, that men should so daringly rush into all those prodigious crimes and villainies, that every where rage and reign, were it not that they entertain loose and wavering apprehensions of the existence of a Deity; and encourage themselves in their vices by some unformed and callow thoughts, that perchance all, that religion teacheth concerning God and a future state, are only polite devices and fictions.

Nay, indeed, our age hath too many, who, not only with the fool, say in their hearts; but are arrived to that height of desperate impudence, as to avow it in express words; yea, to dispute and argue it, that there is no God.

I shall, therefore, confine this great and primary truth, upon which depend all our religion and all our hopes, by some convincing and demonstrative arguments, which I intend to make as plain and obvious as the matter will permit.

(1) The Universal Consent of all nations strongly proves the being of a Diety.

For that which all agree in, must needs be accounted a dictate of nature; and what is such must needs be acknowledged to be a maxim of truth.

Next to the report of our senses, we may credit the reports that nature and all mankind give, concerning the truth and existence of things. Now if we should impannel all the nations of the world upon this trial; not only the more civilized, where custom or the authority of laws might be suspected to introduce this belief, but those that are the most rude and savage: they would all, with one consent, return this verdict, That there is a God.

Nay, although one part of mankind hath so strangely dissented from another, about all other things; as concerning their laws, government, and customs, yea, and manner of worship; yet those, that differ in all things else, seem only to agree in these two; Human Nature, and the Belief of a Deity. Never was there any nation so wild and barbarous, that acknowledged no God;* but their great

* *Nulla gens est, neque tam immansueta nec tam fera, quæ, etiamsi ignoret vel eam habere Deum deceat, tamen habendum sciat.* Cicero.

fault and folly was, that they acknowledged too many. And it is strange to think, that the whole race of mankind, in so many generations as have successively followed one another since the beginning of the world, yea and if there were no God from all eternity, should not have grown wise enough to free themselves from so troublesome an opinion, as that of the existence of a God: an opinion, that crosses their worldly interests, contradicts their sensual desires, damps their joys, torments their natural consciences; and which, those, who are wicked, would give whatsoever is dearest to them, to have utterly rooted out of their minds: it is strange, I say, that they should not, all this while, be able to deliver themselves from the tyranny and fetters of this fancy, were it only imposed upon them by false reports and surmises.

How could the world be so easily drawn into such several shapes and forms of religion; which, among the heathen, were almost infinite; and, among others, too various and different: were there not a natural inclination in the souls of men, to embrace some religion or other; and an indelible character of a Deity imprinted on their minds? Insomuch, that, in the times of darkness, when the truth was not clearly revealed to the world, because they knew neither the true object nor the right way of worship, this restless notion of a Deity put them upon inventing divers vile, uncouth, and ridiculous superstitions. But yet this is so far from invalidating, that it strongly confirms to us their belief of a Deity; in that they submitted themselves to observances, not only unreasonable, but many times barbarous and inhuman, if they thought them acceptable to the gods whom they worshipped. Yea, rather than they would be without a Deity, they would dig them gods out of their gardens;* or consecrate dogs, and serpents, and any vermin that first met them in the morning, and had the good luck thereby to creep into honour.

What, then, is it likely that the world received this notion first by tradition; whereas, before, men generally believed there was no God? This cannot be: for would they in reason quit their former persuasion, to receive this new false one; especially, when it is the only thing, that fills them with fears and torments, and a thousand affrights and horrors? Yea, those, who would fain wear off this notion of a God, and persuade themselves to be atheists if they could, what violence have they offered to themselves to do it! And when they thought they had prevailed, yet this impression hath still returned,

* *Porrum et cepe nefas violare aut frangere morsu.*
O sanctas gentes! quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis
Numina. JUVENAL.

when they have been startled with thunder, or earthquakes, to sickness, and the dreadful apprehensions of approaching death.

Possibly, some few may have been found in the world, who have dissented from the rest of mankind in this belief of a Deity; yet their dissent is not sufficient ground for us to conclude, that therefore it is not a dictate of nature. For how many are there, that violate the laws of nature; and do those things, which the innate light and reason of a man abhor and abominate! yet none will from thence infer, that there are no such things as natural laws: so neither, though some might have utterly razed out of their minds the notion and belief of a God, will it thence follow, that this belief of a Supreme Being is not an impression of nature.

But, suppose the number of atheists had been never so great, is it not far more probable that it should rather be a dictate of nature, that there is a God, than that there is not: since the disbelief of his being would open a wide gap to all manner of lewdness and licentiousness; yea, and to the bold commission even of those sins, which are against nature itself? Shall such men be thought to speak the sense of nature, whose opinion so directly tends to bring in sins contrary to the light and laws of nature? For, take away the belief of a Deity, and it is as much to be doubted, whether the refined discourses of reason, and the consideration of decency, and the intrinsical rewards of virtue, will be of force sufficient to restrain men from the most enormous and unnatural vices. That, therefore, must needs be a dictate of nature, which is almost the only thing, which gives authority to the law of nature: and such is the Belief of a God.

(2) Another convincing demonstration of the existence of a Deity, is taken from the serious consideration and review of the Frame and Order of the Universe; in which there are as many wonders, as there are creatures.

And, certainly, he must needs be very blind and stupid, that reads not God in every one of them.

Cast but your eyes upwards, and contemplate the vast expansion of the heavens, which are the canopy of the world, the roof of this great house the universe, the lid or cover that is put over all the works of nature. Behold how gloriously this canopy is studded! How many glittering lights are hung up in this roof, to illuminate our inferior world; and to discover to our eyes all visible objects, and to our mind the Invisible God! Who hath gilded the rays of the sun, or silvered the face of the moon? Who hath marshalled the huge host of heaven; and set the stars in such array, that not one of them hath broken its rank, nor strayed out of its course and order?

Whose hand is it, that turns the great wheels of heaven; and makes them spin out days, and months, and years, and time, and life unto us? Who hath ordered the vicissitudes of day and night, summer and winter, that these run not into one another, and blend themselves and the whole world in confusion; but, with a perpetual variety, observe their just seasons and interchanges? Do not all these wonderful works proclaim aloud, that, certainly, there is a great and glorious God, who sits enthroned on high; and who hath thus paved the bottom of heaven with stars, and adorned the inner parts of it with glories, yet to us unknown? Upon which very reflection, the Psalmist tells us, *The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handywork:* Ps. xix. 1.

But, not to carry the atheist up to heaven, let us descend lower; through the vast ocean of liquid air: and there observe, how the grosser vapours are bound together in clouds, which, when the drowth and thirst of the earth call for refreshment, dissolve themselves into small drops, and are as if it were sifted into rain. How comes it to pass, and whose wisdom and providence hath so ordered it, that there should not fall whole clouds and cataracts, but drops and showers? that they should not tumble upon us, but distil? an effect so wonderful, that there is scarce any other work of nature, that the Scripture doth more frequently ascribe unto God, as a demonstration of his power and government, than that he sendeth rain upon the earth. Yea, and these clouds, how often are they charged with thunder and lightnings; as though it were so ordered of purpose, that, if their contexture cannot convince, yet their terror might affright the atheist! Who can give any satisfactory account, how that artillery came there planted? or how those terrors of mankind are there generated? Let the atheist tell me how it comes to pass, that such contraries meet together in one; and that the same cloud should be both a fountain of water, and yet a furnace of fire. And, therefore, the Prophet ascribes this particularly to God's Almighty Providence: Jer. x. 13, *He maketh lightnings with the rain;* and accounteth it such a remarkable instance of the divine operation, that he repeateth it again, Chap. li. 16.

If we descend into the lowest story of this great building, the earth; what a shop of wonders shall we find there! That the whole mass and globe of it should hang pendulous in the air, without any thing to support it; and, whereas small bodies of little weight fall through the air, yet that this great and ponderous body should be fixed for ever in its place, having no foundation, no support, but that air which every mote and fly doth easily cut through; that

this round ball of earth should be inhabited on every part; that the feet of other men should be opposite to ours, and yet they walk as erect, and be as much upon the face of the earth as we are; that the middle point of the earth should be the lowest part of it, and of the universe, and whatsoever is beyond that be upwards: these and many others are such unaccountable mysteries to our comprehension, and yet are found so infallibly certain by experience and manifold proofs, that he must be an atheist out of mere spite, who shall seriously consider them, and not be induced by that consideration to adore the Infinite Power and Wisdom of the Author of them.

It would be too long to instance in the various sorts of creatures that we behold; how artificially they are framed; what an excellent configuration there may be observed in their several parts; what subserviency of one to another; how they are suited to the offices of nature; what secret channels and conveyances for life and spirits; what springs of various motions are included in the small body of a fly or of a mite. Certainly, there is not the least thing, than an atheist can cast his eye upon, but it confutes him: but, especially, if he shall seriously consider the wonderful structure of a human body, the excellent contrivance and use of all the parts, he cannot choose but, after he hath admired the artifice of the work, admire also the Infinite Wisdom of the Maker, and cry out with holy David, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.... and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth:* Ps. cxxxix. 14, 15. Yea, not only a David; but Galen, a heathen, one, who it is thought, was not over credulous in matters of religion: yet, when he had minutely inspected the many wonders and miracles that are contained in the frame of our body, he could not forbear composing a hymn to the praise of our All-wise Creator.

And, therefore, as the Lord Verulam observes,* God never wrought a miracle to convince an atheist, because his ordinary works may convince him; and, unless men will be wilfully and stubbornly blind, they must needs subscribe to that of St. Paul: Acts xiv. 17. God hath *left not himself without witness, in that he* doth *good, and* gives *us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.* And, Rom. i. 20. *The invisible things of* God *are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse.* When we see footsteps evidently imprinted on the earth, shall we not easily collect that certainly some one hath passed that way? When we see a stately fabric

* Bacon's Essay of Atheism.

built according to all the rules of art, and adorned with all the riches and beauty that magnificence can expend about it, must we not presently conclude, that certainly there was some skilful architect that built it? Truly, every creature is *quoddam vestigium Dei:* we may observe his footsteps in it; and see how his attributes, his wisdom, his goodness, and his power have passed along that way. And the whole world is a stately fabric; a house, that God hath erected for himself: the magnificence and splendor of it are suitable to the state of the Great King: it is his palace, built for the house of his kingdom, and the honour of his majesty: and we may easily conclude, that so excellent a structure must needs have an excellent architect, and that the builder and maker of it is God.

Now that, which makes some proud spirits backward to acknowledge God in the works of nature, is, that they think they can, by their reason alone, give a plausible account of those effects and phenomena which we see in the world, by deducing them from second and natural causes. And, therefore, many of those, who are of an inquisitive and searching genius, when they find such effects depend upon and flow from such and such natural causes, applaud themselves in the discovery; and look no further nor higher, but neglect the First and chief Cause of all, even God.

Hence some have thought, that reason and philosophy are great enemies to religion, and patrons of atheism: but, in truth, it is far otherwise; and the atheist hath not a more smart and keen adversary, since he will not submit his cause to be tried by Scripture, than true reason and profound philosophy.

But if any, who seem to be knowing and learned men, are less inclined to the belief of a Deity, it is not their learning, but their ignorance, that makes them so. The same Lord Verulam hath well observed, that a little philosophy inclines a man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy brings it about again to religion. And I dare challenge the most learned men in the world, to give a satisfactory account of the most vulgar and common appearances in nature, without resolving them at last into the will and disposal of the God of Nature. If I should ask them, What makes the grass green, or a stone to fall downwards, or the fire to aspire upwards, or the sun to enlighten and warm the world? What answer can they give, but that it is the property of their natures; or what is altogether as insignificant and unintelligible? But, if I should question farther, How came their natures to be distinguished with such properties? they must either here be silent; or confess a First Cause, which endowed their natures with such properties and actions: for,

although a man may, for some few successions of causes and effects, find one to depend upon another; yet they must all, at last, be resolved into and terminate in God.

And this is the Second Demonstration of the Being and Existence of a Deity.

(3) Unless the being of a God be presupposed, there can no tolerable account be given of the being of anything.

We see innumerable beings in the world, different from each other both in kind and particulars. Now what rational account can the atheist give, how these things come to have a being? There are but two ways imaginable: either that the world was formed by chance; or, else, that it had its being from all eternity. And, accordingly, as if it were still fatal for them to encounter with the same inconveniences for which they disavow religion, atheists are divided into two sects.

[1] There is the Epicurean Atheist: who affirms, that the world indeed had once a beginning, but it was merely by chance: for, there having been from all eternity infinite particles of matter moving to and fro in an infinite space; at last, meeting casually, they linked one in another, and so, by mere chance, formed this world which we now see. A fancy, so grossly ridiculous, that, were it not now again taken up by some who pretend to be great lights in reason and philosophy, I would not condescend so much as to mention it.

But, as Cicero saith,* both judiciously and ingeniously, as soon shall they persuade me, that an innumerable company of loose and disordered letters, being often shaken together and afterwards thrown out upon the ground, should fall into such exquisite order, as to frame a most ingenious and heroic poem; as that atoms, straying to and fro at random, should ever casually meet together to make a world consisting of heaven, and of air, and sea, and earth, and so many sorts and species of living creatures, in the frame and composure of which we see such wonderful and inimitable skill.

Had Archimedes's or Posidonius's sphere,† in which were imita-

* *Hoc qui existimat fieri potuisse, non intelligo cur non idem putet, si innumerabiles unius et viginti formæ literarum aliquo conjiciantur, posse ex his, in terram excussis, annales Ennii, ut deinceps legi possint, effici: quod nescio an ne in uno quidem versu possit tantum valere fortuna.* Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. ii. 37.

† *Si in Scythiam, aut in Britanniam, sphæram aliquis tulerit hanc, quam nuper familiaris noster effecit Posidonius, cujus singulæ conversiones idem efficiunt in sole, et in lunâ, et in quinque stellis errantibus, quod efficitur in cælo singulis diebus et noctibus, quis in illâ barbarie dubitet, quin ea sphæra sit perfecta ratione. Hi, autem, dubitant de mundo, ex quo et oriuntur et fiunt omnia, casunè ipse sit effectus, aut necessitate*

ted all the motions and conversions of the sun, moon, and planets, been presented to the most ignorant or illiterate nations under heaven, they could not be so grossly stupid, as to think such a piece, a work of mere chance, but of accurate art and study. And shall any doubt, when he sees, in the great machine of the world, the same and many other conversions made in a more perfect manner, than they can be represented in any such type, whether it be a work of uncertain chance, or else the product of a most perfect mind and comprehensive understanding? For, certainly, if a strong and mastering reason be required, only to imitate the works of nature; much more, then, to produce them.

And why had not those atoms, that could thus fortuitously frame a world, why had they not built houses too, and cities, and woven us garments;* that so, by very good chance, we might have found these necessaries ready provided to our hands, and saved the trouble and labour of making them? Did ever any atoms fall into such exact order, and knit so artificially together, as to frame a clock, or a watch, or any other piece of ingenious mechanism? And will the atheist then be so silly, as to believe that these little dusts of beings should, by mere hazard, meet and join together, to frame the whole world; and bestow such various forms and motions upon creatures, as we daily see and admire? Look but upon the most contemptible worm that crawls, we shall find it a far more excellent piece of mechanism, a far more curious engine, than any that ever the art or wit of man could frame. And shall chance make these, yea, creatures of a more wonderful composure, which yet could never make a watch, or a clock, or any of those engines which we have contrived for the use and service of life?

And what will they say to the accurate operations of sense and reason? Is it possible, that one small dust should see or feel another? and, if not one, then not ten thousand put together. Shall their configuration give them this faculty, which their being and substance doth not? Which I shall then believe, when I shall be convinced that a statue, carved the most exquisitely that art can perform, can any more see, or taste, or feel, than it could whilst it was rude and unformed wood.

aliquâ, an ratione ac mente divinâ; et Archimedem arbitrantur plus valuisse in imitandis sphæræ conversionibus, quàm naturam in efficiendis; præsertim, cùm multis partibus sint illa perfecta, quàm hæc simulata solertiùs. Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. ii. 34.

* *Quòd si mundum efficere potest concursus atomorum, cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur urbem non potest, quæ sunt minùs operosa et multo quidem faciliora.* Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. ii.

But, suppose that sense could be caused by mere matter put in motion; yet what shall we say to the refined speculations and profound discourses of reason? Is it likely, or indeed possible, that little corpuscles should reflect and argue? that atoms should make syllogisms, or draw up parties between pro and con? Or will the atheist grant, that there is no other difference between himself and a mere senseless block, but only configuration of parts? and that when he disputes most subtilly for his cause, all his reasons and arguments are but a little dust that flies up and down in his brains? But, that the agitation of material particles should produce any sprightly acts of wit and discourse, is so monstrously abhorrent to true reason, that I doubt I shall never be persuaded to believe it, until some cunning man convince me, that the highway too is in a deep speculation, and teeming with some notable discourse, whensoever the dust is stirred and flies about it.

And yet, forsooth, men must now-a-days be atheists, that they may be rational; and think it a high demonstration of their parts and ingenuity, to doubt of a Deity, and call all religion into question. Whereas, were there anything in the belief of a God and the most mysterious points of our religion, half so absurd and ridiculous, as there is in atheism, I should most readily explode it, and count it altogether unworthy to be entertained by any man that is ingenuous and rational.

[2] Therefore, others' being pressed with the huge and monstrous absurdities of this way of giving an account of the appearances of nature, hold, that the world is from eternity, and never had any beginning at all. And these are the Aristotelian Atheists. But,

1st. It is altogether unreasonable, to deny a God; and yet grant that very thing, for which alone they deny him. The only reason, that tempts atheists to deny a Deity, is, because they cannot conceive a Being Infinite and Eternal; and, therefore, when they yield the world to be so, what do they else, but run into the same inconveniency which they would avoid; and, that they may not grant one eternal being, grant innumerable? So fatal it is, for error to be inconsistent with itself, and to trip up its own principles.

2dly. If the world be eternal, there must of necessity have been passed an infinite succession of ages. Now, our understanding is as much non-plussed to conceive this, as an Infinite Being that should create the world: for, if the world had no beginning, then an infinite number of days and years, yea, of millions of years and generations of men, are already actually passed and gone. And, if they are passed, then they are come to an end: and so we shall

have both a number that is actually infinite, and likewise somewhat infinite and eternal that is come to an end: a very proper consequence for one, that avoids the belief of a Deity, because he would be rational, and cannot conceive a being that is infinite!

3dly. If there have already been infinite successions of generations in the world, certainly, those which are yet to come, will make them more: and so we shall find a number greater than that, which is allowed to be actually infinite. Or if, to avoid this contradiction, the atheist should affirm, that the generations to Abraham and the generations to David were both equal because both infinite, he will thereby fall into two other gross contradictions: the one, that a number added to a number should make no addition; the other, that, since the generations to Abraham were but a part of the generations to David, the part should be equal to the whole.

4thly. There is no one moment in succession, which was not once present: * and, consequently, imagine a duration as long as you please, yet in it of necessity there must be some one moment, which when it was present, all the rest were future; and if all the rest were future, this moment was then the beginning. So that it is impossible there should be a successive duration without a beginning, and therefore impossible it should be from eternity.

5thly. In all the revolutions of generation and corruption that can be imagined, yet the life of animals must necessarily be before their death: † for none can die, till he hath lived; and none can live, but he must pass sometime before he dies. There was, therefore, a time before any animal died: consequently, their corruption and death were not from eternity: neither, before their death, had they lived an infinite time, but only some few days or years; and therefore their generation and life were not from eternity.

These things I do but cursorily mention, to give you a taste of the folly and unreasonableness of atheism; nor, perhaps would it be proper to insist upon them at large: but, by these few arguments, you may see how unreasonable it is for an atheist to boggle at the belief of a Deity; whereas, let him lay down whatsoever principles he will, he shall find his reason more puzzled and entangled by these absurdities that will necessarily follow upon them, than he shall by any difficulties that are consequent upon the belief of a God. Which belief unless we entertain, we can give no tolerable account at all of the various beings that are in the world: for neither are they eternal, neither have they happened by chance; as I have demonstrated to you.

* Mori Metaph. Part 1. cap. 10.

† Id. ibid. et Place 9. Thes. Salm. De Statu Adami ante Lapsum.

It is therefore absolutely necessary, that there be some First Cause of all things, which we behold, which is not itself caused, nor produced by any other: for if every thing were caused by some preexistent being, then there never was a being, before which there was not another; and so this gross absurdity will follow, That, before there was a being, there was a being: a fit consequence for atheists, who pretend only to rational speculation, to swallow! Therefore, we must necessarily rest in some First Cause, from which all other things have their origin, and is itself caused by none; and that is the Great God, whom we adore; the Great Creator, and both Governor of Heaven and Earth, and of all thinge visible and invisible.

This is therefore a Third Demonstration of a Deity.

(4) Perhaps it would shrewdly puzzle the metaphysics of an atheist, to answer the argument of Bradwardine. *

It is possible, that there should be such a being, as should exist necessarily; since it is no more a contradiation, to exist necessarily than to exist contingently; and a far higher and more absolute perfection. But, if it be possible, that there might be such a being; then it is certain, that there is: because necessity of existence is included in the very essential conception of it: or else this contradiction would follow, That it is possible for that not to be, which yet is necessary to be. This being, therefore, must needs be eternal, independent, and self-sufficient; and that is the God, whom we adore.

(5) But, to leave these more abstruse and scholastic notions, in the fifth place, If there be no God, then neither have there been any miracles performed in the world, nor any prophecies or predictions of future contingencies.

[1] There can be no Miracles performed without a Divine and Infinite Power. For, certainly, if there be no being above nature, there can be no effects either above or contrary to the course of nature: for nature, when it is left to itself, can not act contrary to its own laws.

Now that there have been miraculous works performed, the atheist cannot deny; unless he will deny the truth of all records, and think it reasonable to make all faith and credit among mankind a sacrifice to his opinionativeness. All heathen authors, as well as the Scriptures, give abundant testimony to this: and, although they deny the doctrine of the Scripture; yet there is no reason they should disbelieve it, when it only relates matter of fact. In this behalf, we desire they would give it as much credit, as they give to the histories of Livy, or Tacitus, or any other author of approved

* Bradward. de Causa Dei. l. i. c. 1. et l. i. c. 14.

honesty. And, certainly, it is but reasonable to credit the consonant depositions of several plain men, who all profess themselves to have been eye-witnesses of those things which they write. Yea, the Jews and Heathens, who lived in those very times, and were most inveterate and cankered enemies against the name of Christ, would have given whatsoever was dearest to them in the world, could they have proved any forgery in those miracles, or deceit in the relaters of them: but the evidence was so clear, that they were forced to confess, even in spite of their own malice, that such strange works were done and really effected. But yet their spleen against the truth was such, that they imputed them only to the power of magic, and the operation of evil spirits. But will our atheist do so too? If so, he must needs acknowledge a God, by acknowledging a Devil: if not, he hath as little reason to believe anything in the world, which he himself hath not seen; as to believe the truth of those reports, which we have received from undoubted hands, delivered to us by the unquestionable testimonies of those who have known and seen what they have reported.

Therefore, if ever there have been any such extraordinary effects, as restoring sight to the blind, and feet to the lame, and life itself to the dead; and that, by no other application than only a word's speaking; there must certainly be a God. For these things are not within the power of Second Causes; being so contrary to the course of nature: and therefore must be ascribed to a Supreme Deity, an Infinite Power, who is the Author and great Controller of Nature.

[2] As there could have been no miracles performed, so neither could there be any Prophecies or Predictions made of contingent events, unless we acknowledge a God, who, in his infinite wisdom and counsel, foresees whatsoever shall come to pass, and *revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets:* Amos iii. 7.

We have many prophecies recorded, which have already had their undoubted effects. Not to instance in all, I shall only mention two. The one is that prophecy of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the final destruction of Jerusalem: Matthew xxiv. 2, which received its full accomplishment about forty years after they had crucified the Lord of Life and Glory. And the other, that prediction concerning Cyrus, that he should re-edify Jerusalem, after it had been destroyed by the Babylonians: Isa. xliv. 28; and, to make this prophecy the more remarkable, it is said, chap. xlv. 4, that, for Israel's sake, God had called him by his name: this was a famous and very particular prophecy of a person, named near two hundred years before he was born; and those things punctually foretold of

him, which he should afterwards perform. The like we have, 1 Kings xiii. 2, where the prophet declaims against the idolatrous altar and worship of Bethel; and foretells that Josiah should destroy it: calling him by his very name, three hundred and forty years before he was born: *O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shalt he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee:* which we read was exactly fulfilled by the same Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 20, for, *he slew all the priests of the high places which were there upon the altars, and burnt men's bones upon them.* Now let any atheist give a rational account, how these future contingents could be thus certainly and circumstantially foreknown and predicted, were there not *a God in heaven, that revealeth secrets:* Dan. ii. 28. They could not certainly see such free and contingent events in the stars; especially so long before they were to be produced: or, if they might; yet, certainly, they could not read names there, nor spell the constellations into words and syllables. There is, therefore, a God, who giveth knowledge, and declareth things to come according as it pleaseth him to illuminate the minds of his servants the prophets, to whom and by whom he spake. And this is a Fifth Demonstration of the Being of a Deity.

(6) The sixth and last is this, there is a Conscience in man: therefore there is a God in heaven.

Conscience could have no power at all over us, unless it were given it from above. How comes it to pass, that wicked wretches are still haunted with pale fears and ghastly horrors; that they are sometimes a terror to themselves, and to all that are about them? They would, if it were possible, abandon themselves, and run away from their own being: but only that they have a witness and a judge within them of all their crimes and impieties; and feel such secret stings, and unseen whips lashing their souls, that the tortures they endure and inflict upon themselves make them sometimes weary of their lives, and put them upon that desperate course of choking both themselves and their consciences too with a halter: whence I say, should this proceed, were there not a God, a Just and Holy Deity, whom conscience reveres? These torments and regrets do not always proceed from fear of shame or punishment from men. No: but conscience hath a power to put them upon the rack for their most secret sins, which no eye ever saw, no heart ever knew but their own. Yea, and it forceth them sometimes themselves to confess and divulge their own infamy, and voluntarily to render themselves to human justice: whence is this, but only from that secret

influence of a Supreme Being, that hath an awe and authority over conscience; and makes it review the sins of a man's life with horror, because it knows that the Just and Holy God will at last review them with vengeance.

And therefore we find, that those, who, in their prosperity, have lived most regardless of a Deity; yet, when their conscience hath been awakened by dangers or sickness, or any surprising accident, the apprehensions of a God have then strongly returned upon them, and filled them with amazement and confusion. Thus the historian reports * of that mad wicked emperor Caligula, who made an open mock and scorn of religion, that yet when it thundered, he would creep under his bed to hide himself from vengeance of that Jupiter, whom at other times he would not spare to deride and threaten. † And therefore, certainly, if there be any such thing as natural conscience in all men, it will necessarily follow, that there must be a God; for, were there no God, there would be no conscience.

And thus I have given you these Six rational Demonstrations, that there is such a Supreme and Infinite Being as a Deity. Many others might be added; but these I account sufficient to convince any atheist, who will indeed be swayed by that reason which he so much deifies and adores, that there is another GOD besides and above it.

(7) Well then, what remains, but that, as we have evinced the Folly and Unreasonableness of Speculative Atheism, so we condemn the impiety of Practical Atheism; the profaneness and irreligion of those, that, as the Apostle speaks, *live* as *without God in the world;* that live, as though they were no God, nor Devil, nor Heaven, nor Hell, nor Future State, nor any Distribution of Rewards in it.

Indeed, every wicked man is, in this sense, an atheist: and such the Apostle hath condemned: Tit. i. 16, *They profess, that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.* Did they really and cordially believe, that there is a Just and Holy God, that takes notice of all their actions; a great and terrible Majesty, who will call them to a strict account for all their cogitations, all their discourses, and all their works; an Almighty God, who hath prepared wrath and vengeance to inflict on all those, who despise his authority, and

* *Nam qui Deos tantopere contemneret, ad minima tonitrua et fulgura connivere, caput obvolvere; ad verò majora, proripere se è struto sub lectumque condere solebat.* Suet. in Cal. cap. 51.

† *Cum Jove Capitolino secreto fabulabatur—nec sine jurgiis, nam vox comminantis audita est* εις γαιαν δαναων περαωσε. Id. c. 22.

transgress his law; would they dare to profane his glorious and reverend name, by impertinent using of it in their trivial talk? would they dare to rend and tare it, by their oaths and blasphemies, and hellish execrations and curses? Did they believe, that he *hath prepared Tophet of old*, that *the pile thereof is fire and much wood*, and that all the wicked of the world shall be cast into it, and there be made an everlasting burnt-sacrifice to the incensed wrath of the Great God; did men believe the horrors and torments of the fire and sulphur, the stench and darkness, the burning chains and fiery whips, the woes and anguish of the damned in hell, which are as far from being utterable, as they are from being tolerable; did they but as certainly believe these things, as it is certain, that, if they believe them not, they shall eternally feel them, would they dare still venture on to treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath? would swearing, and lying, and stealing, and drunkenness, and uncleanness so generally reign among us as they do?

Indeed, we persuade ourselves, that we do believe these things: we profess that there is a God, and that God infinitely holy and infinitely just; and that he will recompense tribulation, anguish, and wrath upon every soul of man that doth evil. But, alas, this is only a verbal belief; contradicted and borne down by a practical atheism! The little influence that the belief of a Holy and Just God hath upon us, to regulate our actions, and to cause us to walk in a holy awe and dread of his Divine Majesty, clearly evinceth, that we may possibly fancy these things, but do not believe them: for, if thou didst seriously and heartily believe that there is a great and a jealous God, who hath said, *Vengeance in mine*, and *I will repay* it, what is there in the world, that could persuade thee to offend him?

Possibly, though thou believest that there is a God, yet thou art not fully persuaded that he is so holy nor so just as his word declares him to be: not so holy, in hating of thy sins; nor so just, in punishing them. But, if thou reliest on this confidence, know,

[1.] That this is only to hope in his mercy, in spite of his truth. He hath sworn, that he will take vengeance on all impenitent wretches; and *wound the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his sins.* And God will be true to his threatenings, as well as to his promises; although thou, and ten thousand others like thyself, eternally perish. Nay,

[2.] If thou believest there is a God, and yet thinkest that this God will spare thee, though thou go on in the presumption of thy heart to add iniquity unto sin, thou art far worse than an atheist: for it is better to have no opinion of God at all, than to have such

an opinion as is unworthy of him; for the one is but infidelity, the other is contumely. Even Plutarch, a heathen, could say, * That it were far less injurious to him, if any should deny that there is such a man in the world as Plutarch, than if he should grant, that such an one indeed there is, but that he is faithless, inconstant, cruel, or revengeful. So, it is not so heinous an affront against the Divine Majesty, to deny that there is any such Supreme Being, as to acknowledge that there is indeed a God, but that this God, is not either infinitely holy in hating thy sins, or infinitely true to his threatenings, or infinitely just in punishing men's impenitency and disobedience. This is a degree of impiety worse than atheism; and yet this, are all ungodly sinners guilty of.

Know, then, O Sinner, and tremble, that there is a God, who sees and observes all thy actions; who writes them down in the book of his remembrance, and will call thee to a strict account for them. God will then judge thee out of thine own mouth, thou Wicked Servant. Thou believest that there is a God: why dost thou not then fear and serve him? Thou believest that there is a heaven and a hell, and an eternity to come: why then dost thou not live answerably to this belief? Either blot it out of your creed, and avow that you do not believe in God the Father Almighty, or else live as those should do, who own so great and terrible, so pure and holy a God. For a speculative atheist to be profane and wicked, is but consonant to his principles: for wherefore should not he gratify all his lusts and sensual desires, whose only hope is in this life; and who doth not look upon himself as accountable for anything hereafter? But, for thee, who acknowledgest a Deity, to live as without God in the world, to break his laws, to slight his promises, to despise his threatenings, is the greatest and most desperate madness in the world: thou showest thyself hereby to be worse, not only than an atheist, but worse than a devil: for the very devils believe and tremble; and yet thou, who professest thyself to believe, dost not tremble.

If therefore, we would not be inexcusable, since we know God, let us glorify him as God; yielding all holy obedience to his laws, and humble submission to his will: conforming ourselves to his purity, depending upon his power and providence, and trusting in his infinite mercy and goodness; till we, at last, arrive unto that

* Εγωγ' αν αν εθελοιμι μαλλον τας ανθρωπας λεγειν περι εμε, μητε γεγονεναι τοπαραπαν μηδε ειναι Πλουταρχον, η λεγειν ὁτι Πλουταρχος εστιν ανθρωπος αθεβαιος, ενμεταβολος, ευχερης προς οργην, επι τοις τυχουσι τιμωρητικος, κ. τ. α. Plut. περι δεισιδαιμ.

state of perfect bliss and felicity, where we shall fully know the ineffable mystery of the Deity, see him that is now invisible, and live there as much by sense and sight as here we do by faith and expectation.

And thus much for the First Sin forbidden in this First Commandment, which is Atheism.

2. The Second Sin that it forbids, is, *Ignorance of the True God.*

For this precept, which requires us to have the Lord Jehovah for our God, as well includes the having of him in our understandings, by knowing him aright; as in our wills and affections, by loving, fearing, and worshipping him. The right worship of God must, of necessity, presuppose the knowledge of the object, to which we direct that worship; or, otherwise, we do but erect an altar to the Unknown God, and all our adoration is but superstition: yea, and we ourselves are but idolaters, although we worship the True Deity; for all that service, which is not directed to the Supreme Essence, whom we conceive to be the Infinitely and Eternally Holy, Just, Merciful, and Glorious, beyond what we can conceive, is not tendered to the True God, but to an idol of our own making, shaped out in the ignorance and blindness of our minds. And, therefore, our Saviour Christ lays this as a black brand upon the Samaritan Worship; John iv. 22, *Ye worship ye know not what;* and that, because with other Gods, they worshipped the True God, under a confused notion of *the God of the Land;* as you may read 2 Kings xvii. 26, without any distinct knowledge of his nature, will, and attributes.

It hath been a proverbial speech, That ignorance is the mother of devotion: but, certainly, such a blind mother must needs bring forth a blind and deformed daughter; a devotion, more rightly called superstition, than devotion; a devotion, shaped only by the fancy, and imposed by irrational fear or humour.

Now because the being and existence of a deity, is a notion so common and natural to mankind, as I have already demonstrated; and that we are strongly inclined to the worship of a God; it will be necessary rightly to know that God, to whom this homage of our souls, and all our affection and veneration is due: for, while we remain ignorant of this, it is impossible but that we should be idolaters; giving that, which is proper to God alone, to some vain created fiction of our own deluded understandings.

Idolatry, therefore, is a sin more common among us than we imagine: for as many ignorant persons as there are, so many idolaters there are; who, though they fall not down before stocks and stones, yet form such uncouth ideas and strange images of God in their

minds, that no more represent his infinite perfections and excellencies, than those dumb idols that the heathens worship.

In prosecution of this general, I shall lay down these following propositions:

(1.) That it is a very hard and difficult matter to have right and genuine conceptions of the Divine Majesty, when we address ourselves unto him to worship him.

I think I may here appeal to the common experience of Christians, whether the most difficult part of their duties be not rightly to apprehend the object of them. Our fancy is bold and busy: and still ready to make too much use of its pencil, and to delineate a God in some shape or other, before whom we present our services: so that, when we should be wholly intent upon our adoration, we must necessarily be engaged in reformation; to pull down and break in pieces those false images, that we had set up: and yet, as soon as we have done this, our imagination falls to work again, makes new pictures of a God; and sets them full before our eyes, as so many idols for us to worship. And, although both reason and religion endeavour to correct these bold attempts of fancy; yet it is a mighty distraction in our duty, to be then disputing the object, when we should be adoring it. I shall only instance in one duty: and that is prayer. How few are there, that do not fashion God in some bodily shape, when they come to pray unto him! We are too apt to figure out his limbs, and to conceive him a man like ourselves. All the proportions, that fancy hath to draw with, are corporeal; and whensoever we frame a notion of angels, or God, or any spiritual substance, we do it by sensible resemblances. Now this is infinitely derogatory to God, who is a spirit; and therefore cannot be represented in any form, without a vast incongruity: and he is *the Father of Spirits*, infinitely more spiritual than spirits themselves, in comparison with whom angels and the souls of men are but drossy and feculent beings; and therefore cannot be worshipped under any form, without idolatry: for that is not a God, which we can shape and mould in our imaginations.

We read how jealous God is, lest any resemblance should be made of him, Deut. iv. 15, 16, *Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure.* And, certainly, if the erecting of a visible image of God be gross idolatry, it is no less than a mental and spiritual idolatry, to frame an invisible image of God in our fancy and conceptions.

And, therefore, although the Scripture frequently ascribes to God the members and lineaments of a man; as eyes, and mouth, and ears, and hands, and feet, &c: yet we must not be so stupidly ignorant, as to believe that these are properly appertaining to the Divine Essence, (which was the old exploded heresy of the Anthropomorphitæ;) but these descriptions are given us, only in condescension to our weakness and infirmities: and though they are spoken ανθρωποπαθως, after the manner of men; yet they must be understood θεοπρεπως, after such a manner as becomes the Majesty of the Divine Nature. And, by such expressions, the Scripture only means, that all those powers and faculties, which are in us, are likewise to be found, although in an infinite and transcendent eminency, in the being of God. He hears and sees, and is able to effect whatsoever he pleaseth; and that, without any configuration of parts or organs, which are utterly repugnant to the simplicity and spirituality of his essence. And, therefore, to shape and fashion out such a God in our thoughts, when we pray unto him, is but to make and worship an idol: and unless faith and religion demolish such images which we set up in our fancy, the worship, which we direct unto them, is hardly to be esteemed the worship of the True God, but the worshipping the work of our own making, and a creature of our own imagination.

And, yet, unless we do represent God to ourselves, when we worship him, it is very hard, if not altogether impossible, to keep up the intension of our spirit, and to hinder our mind from straying and gadding. Therefore,

(2) The right way to attain unto a true notion and a sound understanding of the Divine Nature, is by a serious consideration of his Attributes.

For these are his very nature; and, when we know them, we know as much of God as can be known by us, in this our weak and imperfect estate.

These Attributes of the Divine Nature are manifold: and, commonly, are distinguished into negative, relative, and positive. I shall only enumerate the chief of them, simplicity, eternity, unchangeableness, immensity, dominion, all-sufficiency, holiness, truth, omnipotence, omniscience, justice, and mercy. Of which the principal, and that most respect us, are Mercy and Justice: all the other are declared to us, in order to the illustration of these. For the glory of these hath God created the world, and all things in it: especially those two capital kinds of creatures, angels and men. For these, hath he permitted sin, which is so odious and detestable

to his infinite purity: for these hath he sent his Son into the world to taste of death for every creature: for these hath he proclaimed his Law, and declared his Gospel, the threatening of the one, and the promises of the other: for these hath he appointed a day, and will erect a tribunal of judgment, that he may make the glory of his mercy and of his justice conspicuous, his justice in the eternal damnation of impenitent wretches, who are vessels of wrath fitted by their own sins for destruction: his mercy, in the salvation of penitent and believing souls, who are vessels of mercy, fitted by his grace for eternal glory. All other attributes, I say, serve to illustrate these two; and, as we conjoin them either to mercy or justice; so they are most enforcing motives, either of hope or fear: it is a mighty support to our hope, when we reflect upon the mercy of God, accompanied with the attributes of eternity, immutability, truth, and omnipotence. And, again, it will affect us with a profound fear and dread of this great and glorious God, to consider that the same attributes attend on his justice: so that both are almighty; the one to save, the other to destroy.

If we would conceive aright of God when we come to worship him, let us not frame any idea of him in our imaginations, for all such representations are false and foolish: but labour to possess our hearts with an awful esteem of his attributes; and, when we have, with all possible reverence, collected our thoughts, and fixed them upon the contemplation of Infinite Justice, Infinite Mercy, Infinite Truth, Infinite Power, and the rest, let us then fall prostrate, and adore it, for this is our God: and therefore the Apostle tells us, 1 John iv. 8, *God is love;* not only loving, but Love itself in the abstract. And, 1 John i. 5, *God is light.*

(3) All the knowledge that we have, or can have, of God here, is collected from what he hath been pleased to discover of himself, either in his works, or in his word.

We have but two books to instruct us; the book of the creatures, and the book of the Scriptures. From the works of creation and providence we may come to know much of God, even his eternal being and Godhead: and the lectures which are read out of this book, are so convincing and demonstrative of many of the glorious attributes of God, that the Apostle tells us, the very heathens themselves were left without excuse, because they did not worship him as God, when by the things which they saw, they knew him to be God; Rom. i. 22.

But to us God hath vouchsafed more clear and lively discoveries of himself, declaring to us those attributes by his word, the knowledge of which we could never have attained by his works alone.

And, therefore, the Scriptures are called the lively oracles of God: Acts vii. 38; and they are the *glass*, wherein, with open face, we behold *the glory of the Lord:* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

(4) When we have improved our understandings to the highest advantage, and stretched them to the largest and most comprehensive size; yet still we shall be left in the dark, and it will be utterly impossible to know God as he is in himself. He dwelleth in that light, to which no mortal eye can approach. He hides and veils himself with light and glory. It is his alone privilege and prerogative, as to love, so to know himself: for nothing better can be loved; nothing greater can be known. God is incomprehensible to all his creatures; but is comprehended by himself: and that Ever-Blessed Essence, which is infinite to all others, is yet finite to its own view and measure.

All the discoveries we receive of God, are not so much to satisfy an inquisitive curiosity, as to excite pious affections and devotion: for Reason, which is the eye of the intellectual soul, glimmers and is dazzled when it attempts to look stedfastly on him, who is *the Father of Lights;* and its weakness is such, that that light, which makes it see, doth also strike it blind. Yea, our Faith, which is a stronger eye than that of reason, and given us that we might see *him who is invisible:* yet here, in this life, it hath so much dust and ashes in it, that it discerns but imperfectly; and receives the discoveries of a Deity refracted though the glass of the Scriptures, so allayed and attempered, that though they are not most expressive of his glory, yet they are fittest for our capacity.

The full manifestation of his brightness is reserved for heaven. This beatificial vision is the happiness and perfection of saints and angels, on which the Godhead displays itself in its clearest rays. There we shall see him as he is, and know him as we are known by him. Here we could not subsist, if God should let out upon us the full beams of his excessive light and glory.

And, therefore, we read in Scripture what dreadful apprehensions the best of God's saints have been possessed withal, after some extraordinary discoveries that God had made of himself unto them. Thus Isaiah cries out: Isa. vi. 5, *Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips .... and mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.* And, when our Saviour Christ put forth his divine power but in the working of a miracle, the glory of it was so terrible and insupportable, even to holy Peter, that he cries out, Luke v. 8, *Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*

Though God be the very life of our souls, and the manifestations

of his love and favour better than life itself; yet, such is our limited estate here in this world, that we cannot see God and live. Frail nature is too weak to contain its own happiness, until heaven and eternal glory enlarge it: and then it shall see those inconceivable mysteries of the Trinity in Unity, the Hypostatical Union of the Human Nature with the Divine: then it shall view and surround the incomprehensible God; and be able to bear the unchecked rays of the Deity, beating full upon it. In the mean time, we must humbly content ourselves with those imperfect discoveries, that God is pleased to allow us: still breathing after that estate, where we shall enjoy perfect vision; and, in it, an entire satisfaction and happiness.

Let us, then, most earnestly covet the knowledge of God; and endeavour to make ourselves here, as like to what we hope to be hereafter, as the frailty of human condition will permit. This is the chief glory of a man: one of the highest ornaments and perfections of a rational soul; that, which doth, in some sort, repair the decays of a fallen estate; and renew those primitive characters, which ignorance and error have obliterated in our souls. And, indeed, without the knowledge of God, we can never be brought to love him, to trust and confide in him, nor to serve him as we ought. And, although there may be a great deal of zeal in ignorant persons; yet zeal, without knowledge, is but a religious frenzy: it is religion, frighted out of its wits. A man, that knows not the bounds of sin and duty, is a fit subject for the Devil to work upon; who will be sure so to manage him, that he shall do a great deal of mischief, very honestly, and with very good intentions.

3. A Third Heinous Violation of the First Command, is by *Profaneness*. Now Profaneness may be taken either in a more large and general, or in a more proper and restrained, sense.

If we take it properly, so it signifies only the neglect or despising of spiritual things: for, in a strict acceptation, he is a profane person, who either slights the duties of God's service, or the privileges of God's servants.

But, in the larger and more common sense of the word, every ungodly sinner, who gives up himself to work wickedness, and lives in a course of infamous and flagitious crimes, is called and reputed a profane person. And, indeed, such an one is profane in the highest degree, that not only neglects the more spiritual duties of religion; but the natural duties of moral honesty, temperance and sobriety: for, as there are but two things in practicals, which make an excellent and accomplished Christian, religion and virtue, the one directing our worship towards God, the other our conversa-

tion towards men; so, on the contrary, the despising of religion and neglect of virtue make up that consummate and accomplished profaneness, which we see so common and prevalent in the world.

But, concerning the wickednesses which usually meet together, and are concerned in this sort of profane persons, I shall not now speak; reserving them to be treated of in their proper place, when I come to insist on those commands, which each of their sins transgresseth.

At present, I shall only take notice of that, which is properly called profaneness; and speak of it as a distinct sin, distinctly prohibited in this precept. And, here, I shall first give you some account of the name, and then of the thing.

* Profane hath its notion or etymology, *quasi porro*, or *procul a fano;* which signifies "far from the temple."

Now because their temples were the usual places, wherein they solemnly worshipped: therefore, the word Profane is transferred to denote those, who neglect and put far from them the worship of God. And so, according to this propriety of signification, many others, besides lewd and debauched wretches, will be found to be profane. For, not only those, who let loose, the reins to all manner of villainies; but even those, whose morality is unblameable, and perhaps exemplary; who lead a sober and rational life, and scorn a vicious action, as a baseness below the nature and unworthy the spirit of a man: yet such grave, prudent, and honest persons do, too many of them, especially in these our days, deserve the censure and black brand of being profane. And, therefore, that we may the better judge who are the profane, and on whom that imputation justly lies, let us consider first, What the sin of Profaneness is; and, secondly, What are the true and proper Characters of a Profane Person.

(1) What Profaneness is.

I answer, in the general, Profaneness is the slighting and neglecting of things holy and sacred; an undervaluing and contemning of those things, that are spiritual and excellent. And whosoever is guilty of this, let his outward demeanour in the world be as fair and plausible as morality or hypocrisy can adorn it, yet he is a profane person; and heinously violates this First Command, which enjoins us to worship, reverence, and honour the most high God whom we profess to own. Now spiritual and sacred things are,

[1] God himself, in his Nature and Essence: whom we profane, whensoever we entertain any blasphemous or unworthy thoughts of him, derogatory to his infinite perfections.

* *Profanum omnes penè consentiunt id esse quod extra fanaticam causam sit; quasi porro á fano & à religione secretum.* Macrob. Saturnal. lib. iii. cap. 3.

[2] God, in his Name: which we profane, when, in our trivial and impertinent discourses, we rashly bolt out that great and terrible name, at which all the powers of heaven and hell tremble. And how much more do we profane it by oaths and execrations; which are now grown the familiar dialect of every mouth, and looked on only as a grace and ornament of speaking! scarce can we hear any discourse, but these flowers are sprinkled among it; and the name of God must be brought in, either as an expletive or an oath. And what doth sadly forebode the growing profaneness of the next age, children are taught or suffered to call upon God in their play, before they are taught to call upon him in their prayers.

[3] God, in his Attributes: which we then profane, when our affections or actions are opposite or unsuitable unto them. We profane his holiness, by our impurity; his omnipotence, by our despondency; his omniscience, by our hyprocrisy; his mercy, by our despair; his justice, by our presumption; his wisdom, by our sinful policy; his truth, by our security notwithstanding his threatenings, and our slothfulness notwithstanding his promises. And, in this sense, every sin, that we commit, is a kind of profaneness; as it manifests a contempt of the infinite perfections and excellencies of the Deity: for there is no man, whose heart is possessed with a reverential and due esteem of the Great God, that can be induced, by any temptations, to sin against him and provoke him. Every sin is a slighting of God: either a slighting of his justice, or mercy, or holiness, or power, or all of them: for what dost thou else, when thou sinnest, but prefer some base pleasure or some sordid advantage, before the Great God of Heaven? The Devil represents the delights of sin, or the profits of the world unto thee, to entice thee; but thy conscience represents unto thee the everlasting wrath of the Great God, if thou consentest; his justice ready to sentence thee to everlasting torments, and his power armed to inflict them: now if thou yieldest, what dost thou but vilify and despise the Almighty God; as if his dread power and severe justice were not so considerable as to outweigh, either the impure pleasure of a vile lust, or the sordid gain and advantage of a little transitory pelf? Nay, couldst thou by one act of sin make all the treasures and delights of the whole world tributary to thee; should the Devil take thee when he tempts, as he took Christ, and show thee all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and promise to instate it all upon thee: yet, to prefer the whole world before the authority of God, who hath strictly forbidden thee to think anything in it worth the venturing upon his displeasure and the hazarding his wrath and ven-

geance, is a most notorious slighting and contemning the Great God, and argues a profane spirit: how much more then, when we sin against God, for nothing; and defy his wrath and justice, without being provoked to it by any temptation! We find how heinously God takes it, and speaks of it as a mighty affront and indignity, that our Lord Christ should be so undervalued as to be sold for thirty pieces of silver; for it argued not only treason but contempt; Zech. xi. 13, *A goodly price that I was prized at by them:* and yet, truly, Judas was a very thrifty sinner, in comparison with many among us: who not only betray Christ to the mocks and injuries of others, but crucify him daily, and put him to an open shame for far less. Yea, there are many, that would not suffer so much as a hair of their head to be twitched off for that, for which they will not stick to lie, and swear, and blaspheme. What should tempt the impious buffoon to deride religion, travest the Holy Scriptures, and turn whatsoever is sacred and venerable into burlesque and drollery; but only, that he may gain a little grinning and sneering applause to his wit, from a company of mad fools like himself? or what should tempt the cheap swearer to open his black throat as wide as hell, and to belch out his blasphemies against heaven, and the God of Heaven; but only, that he fancies that a well-mouthed oath will make his speech the more stately and genteel? And are these matters of such consequence, as to be called or accounted temptations? Certainly, there can be nothing else in these sins, besides a mere mad humour of sinning: which declares a most wretched contempt of God, when we do that for nothing, which his soul hates and his law forbids, and a most profane spirit, in making that common and trivial, which is infinitely holy and sacred.

Thus you see how God is profaned in his Nature, in his Name, and in his Attributes.

(4) The Time, which God hath set apart and consecrated for his own worship and service, is sacred and holy: which we profane, when we employ any part of it in the unneccessary affairs of this life, but much more in the service of sin. This is a sacrilegious robbing God of what is dedicated entirely to him. And that, either by his immediate appointment; as the Sabbath: or by the appointment of those, whom God hath set over us, and intrusted not only to preserve our rights and properties, but also his worship inviolate; of special days of joy or mourning, thanksgiving or humiliation.

[5] The Ordinances of Jesus Christ are holy and sacred: which we profane when either we neglect them, or are remiss and careless in our attendance on them. But of this I shall speak more anon.

Thus I have shown you what profaneness is. It is a slighting, and despising of spiritual and sacred things: such as are holy originally, as God, his name and attributes; and such as are holy by institution, as his sabbaths and ordinances.

(2) By what we have thus spoken concerning profaneness, we may the easier dispatch the second general propounded, which was, to give you some particular characters of a Profane Person; that we may be the better able to look into our own hearts and lives, and both observe and correct that profaneness which resides there.

[1] Therefore, he is a profane person, that thinks and speaks slightly of religion.

Religion is the highest perfection of human nature. By it, man differs more from brute beasts, than he doth by his reason. For brute-creatures have some notable resemblance and hints of reason; but none at all of religion: they glorify God, as all the works of the creation do, by showing forth his infinite attributes in their frame and production; but they cannot adore nor worship him. This is a pre-eminence peculiar to the most perfect pieces of the creation, men and angels. For, as it is a perfection of the Deity, to be the object of worship, to whom all adoration both in heaven and earth ought to be directed; so it is the perfection of rational creatures, to ascribe honour, and glory, and praise, and worship to him, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. And, therefore, they, who despise religion, despise that, which is their own chiefest excellency; and profane that, which is the very crown of their natures and beings.

But, alas, have we not many such profane persons among us, who deride piety, and make a scoff of religion; that look upon it only as a politic invention, to keep the rude and ignorant vulgar in awe?

Yea, and those, who take up their religion, not by choice, but merely by chance; either as a patrimony left them by their fathers, or as a received custom of the country wherein they were born: never troubling themselves to examine the reasonableness and certainty of it? These, likewise, are profane spirited men; who do not believe religion to be a matter of that concernment, as to require their exactest study and industry in searching into its grounds and principles, but think that any may suffice, whatsoever it be.

Again: those, who do secretly despise the holiness and strictness of others, and think they are too precise, and make more ado to get to heaven than needs. Bnt, indeed, they are not too precise: but these are too profane, who thus contemn religion, as unnecessary and superfluous.

[2] He is a profane person, who neglects the public worship and service of God, when he hath opportunity and ability to frequent it.

And, alas, how many such are there, who yet think it foul scorn to have this black name fixed upon them; yea, and are the readiest in the world to brand others with it, that are not of their way and sentiments! but, let them be who they will, that despise and forsake the solemn assemblies, they do interpretatively despise and forsake God, whose especial presence is only in two places; Heaven, and the Church: in the one, by his glory; in the other by his presence.

Now these are of two sorts: some, that absent themselves, out of a wretched sloth, and contempt of the word and ordinances of Jesus Christ; others, that withdraw themselves, out of a pretended dissatisfaction and scruple of conscience. Both are profane: but the one sort strangely mingles profaneness and hyprocrisy together; and the other is profane out of ignorance or atheism.

1st. Some are Negligently Profane, and absent themselves from the ordinances of Jesus Christ, and the solemn worship of God, upon mere sloth and reachlessness.

And how many such carelessly profane are in these parts, the thinness of our congregations doth too evidently declare. If we should now go from house to house, should we not find the far greater part of the inhabitants idly lolling at home? who, after they had snorted out the forenoon in their beds, and thereby perhaps digested their last night's drunkenness, spend the afternoon in their chapel, the chimney, either with vain chat, or intemperate cups; and sacrifice to their God, their belly, while they should be worshipping the Great God of Heaven. Possibly, a fair day, or want of other diversion, may sometimes bring these drones to church: yet this is so seldom, that we may well suspect they come, not indeed for custom sake; but rather out of novelty, than devotion. But if it prove a wet or louring day, these tender people, whom neither rain nor cold can prejudice at a fair or market, dare not stir out of their doors, nor step over their own threshold into God's, lest they should hazard their health, instead of gaining their salvation. What shall I say to such brutes and heathens, as these are; who not only deny the power, but the very form of godliness? Some few of them may, perhaps, be now present to hear me: and may my word, nay, not mine, but the word of the Living God, strike them! God will *pour out* his *wrath upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not on* his *name.*

2dly. Some, again, are Humoursomely Profane; who withdraw

themselves from the public worship of God, merely upon pretended scruple and dissatisfaction.

I think it is no uncharitableness to say, that where scruple at the administration of ordinances is only pretended to colour contempt of the ordinances, there religion is only made a mask and vizor for hypocrisy: for he, that shall scruple to pray by a Set Form, and yet not scruple to swear extempore; he, that shall scruple to eat and drink at the Lord's Table kneeling, and yet not scruple to drink at his own table, or at an ale-bench, till he cannot stand; he, that shall scruple the cross in baptism, and yet not scruple the breaking his baptismal vow; he, that shall scruple obedience to man's laws, and yet not scruple disobedience to God's, but shall lie, and defraud, and perjure, and oppress, and look upon it as the privilege of his perverseness and contradiction, to do so; I shall make no scruple to call such a scrupulous swearer, or drunkard, or cheat, a gross and profane hypocrite.

I do not, I dare not say, that all those, that separate from our communion, are of this note; no more than that all, who join with us are free from these crimes: no, I believe and know the contrary; and that very many, who have in the simplicity of their hearts, followed Absalom in a rebellion, 2 Sam. xv. 11, do now likewise follow Korah in a schism.

Towards such, I would take up words of meekness; and, in the bowels of love, expostulate with them: but, alas, they do not, they will not hear me! I would beseech them to account of us as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, as well as others: and, if they cannot deny that we are so, will they deny us audience, when we come as ambassadors from the Great King of Heaven, to deliver his message to them in his name? Do we not preach the same truths; and exhort you, as far as we are able, to the practice of the same holiness? Do we not administer the same Sacraments wherein are represented and sealed to all believing partakers the benefits of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is it then?

Are we therefore rejected, because, as we have our commission from God, so we have our mission by law and authority from men? If it be so, this is not zeal, but contumacy and perverseness.

Or are they our own personal faults and miscarriages, the neglect of our ministry or the scandal of our lives, that make men to abhor the offerings of the Lord, and forsake his tabernacle? Indeed, I would much rather deplore, than excuse them. Yet, since this imputation cannot, without great wrong and injustice, be laid upon

all, why is the defection from all? Why are godly, laborious, and conscientious ministers forsaken and despised, as well as the rest? But, suppose they were all as black, as aspersions and calumnies would render them: yet, certainly, they cannot be thought worse than the Scribes and Pharisees; who were not only vicious in their lives, but corrupt in many principal parts of their doctrine: yet, such was the authority and reverence of Moses' chair, that our Lord Christ himself, who was the great Teacher of the World, sends his own scholars to learn of them; only because they were the allowed and authorized instructors of the people: Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*

Or, finally, is it that the ordinances of Jesus Christ are, as they say, burdened with some observances, which they cannot so well digest and comply with? Not now to defend these things in particular, let me only say, That they nothing hinder the energy of the gospel, where it is attended on with an humble submissive soul, and tractable and docile affections. And what slight opinions soever the overweening fancies of the men of this generation may have taken up concerning our way of worship; yet, I am sure that many thousands of souls have been converted and saved, since our happy and blessed reformation from popery, by the ordinances of Jesus Christ, administered with all the same observances which are now so much vilified and condemned. And I pray God profaneness be not laid to the charge of a great many, who not only neglect, but deride and despise that worship, which God hath accepted and rewarded; and that way of administration, which he hath sanctified in the conversion, and sealed in the salvation of many blessed and glorious saints now in heaven.

Yet I do not think all those, who do as yet refrain from our public assemblies, merely out of the dissatisfaction of their consciences; who do desire and endeavour to be satisfied, and would willingly close with their duty, as soon as it is discovered to them, without sticking at the examples of others, or their own former contrary practice: I dare not, I say, think them guilty of profaneness; although, for the present, they may be very much misguided

But, for others, that either absent themselves out of mere carelessness and a wretched neglect of the commands of Christ, or only out of humour and frowardness; and, because they have been of another way, therefore they will stiffly and pertinaciously maintain it, and cast all the odium they can devise, and all the dirt they can

rake together, though it be with lies and slanders, upon us: such, as search for all manner of arguments, not so much to satisfy their consciences, as merely to cavil against our worship; and, when they can neither condemn it by scripture nor reason, do it by bitter invectives, odious reflections, and a scoffing contempt, on purpose to make it both hateful and ridiculous to the people: such, I shall be bold in the Lord, to pronounce profane and irreligious wretches. And, whereas they cry out upon the profaneness of others, and make that a pretence why they separate and rend the body of Christ into schisms, they themselves are most profane: despising the holy ordinances of Jesus Christ, and thereby making themselves unworthy to be admitted to such holy mysteries; and worthy to be excluded, not only by their own voluntary obstinacy, but by a judicial censure.

So much for the Second Character of a Profane Person.

[3] He is also a profane person, who neglects the performance of religious duties in private.

Every house ought to be a temple dedicated to God; and every master a priest, who should offer unto God the daily sacrifices of prayers and praises. But, alas, how many profane persons have we, and how many profane families, who scarce ever make mention of God, but in an oath; nor never call upon his name, but when they imprecate some curse upon others! How many, who wholly neglect the duty of prayer; and think they sufficiently discharge their trust, if they provide for the temporal subsistence of their families, though they utterly neglect the care of their souls, and their spiritual concernments! such profane families as these, God ranks with infidels and heathens, and devotes them to the same common destruction: Jer. x. 25.

Nor ought our family duties to be seldomer performed by us than morning and evening. In the morning, prayer is the key, that opens unto us the treasury of God's mercies and blessings: in the evening, it is the key, that shuts us up under his protection and safeguard. God is the Great Lord of the Whole Family both in Heaven and Earth: other masters are but, under him, entrusted to see that those, who belong to their charge, perform their duties both to him and them. One of the greatest services, that we can do for God, is to pray unto him and praise him. And, how unjust and tyrannical is it for a master of a family to exact service to himself, when he takes no care to do service to his great Lord and Master, to whom it is infinitely more due! Neither is there any excuse that can prevail to take off your obligation from this duty.

Not that thou art ignorant, and knowest not how to pray. For

many are the helps, that God hath afforded thee. Do but bring breath and holy affections: others have already brought to thy hands words and expressions proper enough for the concerns of most families. And, besides, use and common practice will facilitate this duty; and, by an incessant conscientious performance of it, thou wilt, through the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost, be soon able to suit thy affections with pertinent expressions, and to present both in a becoming manner unto the Throne of Grace.

Not the multiplicity and incumbrance of thine affairs. For, the more and the weightier they are, the more need hast thou to ask counsel and direction of God; and to beg his blessing upon thee in them: without which, thou wilt but labour in the fire, and weary thyself for very vanity.

Not thy bashfulness and modesty. For will it not be a far greater shame to thee, that those, whom thou governest, and perhaps overawest even by thy rash and unreasonable passions, should be able to overawe thee from so excellent and necessary a duty? Be ashamed to sin before them: be ashamed to talk loosely, to profane the name of God, to be intemperate, or unjust before them, to defile thy mouth and their ears with unclean and scurrilous discourses: be ashamed to neglect thy duty: but be not ashamed to pray; for our Saviour hath told us, Mark viii. 38, that *whosoever shall be ashamed of* him..... *in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.*

And, therefore, since there is no just reason, why thou shouldst refrain prayer from the Almighty, whosoever thou art that doest so, be thy conversation in all other respects never so blameless, (which yet it is not very probable that it should be, when thou beggest not grace from God to direct it) thou art a profane person; and declarest thyself to be so, by the neglect of the most holy and spiritual of all those duties, wherein we are to draw nigh unto God.

[4] He is a profane person, that performs holy duties slightly and superficially.

All our duties ought to be warmed with zeal, winged with affection, and shot up to heaven from the whole bent of the soul. Our whole hearts must go into them; and the strength and vigour of our spirits must diffuse themselves into every part of them, to animate and quicken them. And therefore the Apostle commands us, Rom. xii. 11, to be *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* Sacrifices, which under the Jewish economy were the greatest part of God's solemn worship, were commanded to be offered up with fire: and

no other fire could sanctify them, but that, which miraculously shot itself down from heaven, or from the presence of God in the sanctuary, which was ever after kept burning for that very use: Lev. ix. 24; vi. 9. So, truly, all our Christian Sacrifices, both of praise and of prayer, must be offered up unto God with fire; and that fire which alone can sanctify them, must be darted down from heaven; the celestial flame of zeal and love, which comes down from heaven and hath a natural tendency to ascend thither again, and to carry up our hearts and souls upon its wings with it.

But, indeed, commonly our duties are either,

1st. Offered up with strange unhallowed fire.

They are fired by some unruly passion of hatred, or self-love, or pride and vain glory. Like those choleric disciples, that presently would command fire to come down from heaven to consume those, who had affronted them by refusing to give them entertainment: only, that God, by such a severe miracle, might vindicate their reputation, and revenge the contumely that was done them; Luke ix. 54. But this is a fire kindled from beneath, and, therefore, our Saviour himself sharply checks their furious zeal: *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of;* Luke. ix. 55. And, certainly, whensoever we pray thus in the bitterness of our spirits, devoting our enemies to destruction, and that because they are ours, rather than God's; when we pour out a great deal of gall mingled with our petitions; such a prayer cannot be from the dove-like Spirit of God, which is meek and gentle, and makes those so who are led and inspired by him. Every party and pursuasion of men is very ready, boldly to prescribe unto God those ways and methods, by which he ought to be glorified: and, if any shall but question their principles, or oppose their rash and unwarrantable proceedings, their touchy zeal is straight kindled; and nothing less than solemn prayers must be made, to devote such an one to ruin and destruction, as an enemy to God and to religion. Here is fire, indeed! but it is wild-fire, kindled from beneath: the fuel of it is faction, popularity, pride, contention, and vain glory; and it sends forth a great deal of smoke from corrupt and inordinate passions.

2dly. If there be none of the former incentives to heat them, then our duties are commonly very cold and heartless.

Our Prayers are dull and yawning, and drop over our lips without any spirit of life in them: how often do we beg God to hear us, when we scarce hear ourselves! and to grant us an answer, when we scarce know what it is that we have asked! We make our requests so coldly and indifferently, as if we only begged a denial.

So, likewise, in our Hearing of the Word: we bring with us very slight and profane spirits to those holy and lively oracles. What else mean the vagrancy and wanderings of our thoughts; our lazy and unbeseeming postures, which would be counted rude and unmannerly to be used in the presence of some of those that are here with us, were they any where else but in the church? What means our weariness; our watching every sand that runs: our despising the simplicity of the Gospel; our prizing the sound of words more than the weight of things: but, especially, our indulged sloth and drowsiness? a sin, that I have observed too common in this place. What, cannot you watch with God one hour? Do we speak poppy and opium to you? Or do you expect that God will now reveal himself to you in dreams? Have ye not houses, have ye not beds to sleep in; or do you despise the Church of Christ? Certainly, God requires our most wakeful and vigilant attention, when he delivers to us the most important things of his law and of our salvation. These, and many other things, which, to particularize, would perhaps be to descend below the majesty of this work, do too evidently declare, that the precious truths of the Gospel are grown vile among us; that we have taken a surfeit of this heavenly manna, this bread of life, and now begin to loathe it. Beware lest this surfeit bring not a famine after it.

It plainly argues much profaneness in our spirits, when we bring only our outward man, or dull and heavy carcases to attend upon God, while our hearts and minds are straying and wandering from him. This is a sign, that we despise God; and account any thing good enough, the lame and the blind, to be offered up unto him. Against such, God hath thundered out a most dreadful curse: Mal. i. 14, *Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrifieth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful.* Thou, who sufferest thy thoughts, or thine eyes which are the index of them, to rove in prayer, or to be sealed up with sleep in hearing, thou despisest the Great God, before whom thou appearest; and thinkest it enough, if thou affordest him thy bodily presence, although thy heart be, with the eyes of the fools, in the ends of the earth. For such a service is but mockery. And it is less irrision, to tender God no service, than to perform it slightly and perfunctorily: the one, is disobedience; but the other, is contempt. This is a Fourth Character of a Profane Person.

[5] He is a profane person, that performs holy duties for worldly ends and advantages.

For what greater contempt of God can there be, than to make his service truckle under the base and low designs of this present life? This is to make religion tributary to interest, and God himself a homage to mammon. And this all hypocrites are guilty of; though they mask their designs with specious pretences, and draw the veil of religion over their sordid and wicked contrivances: yet they cry out, with Jehu, *Come, see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts;* when he drove on so furiously only for the kingdom.

Indeed, a hypocrite, though he be not commonly so esteemed, is the most profane wretch that lives. The gross, profligate sinner offers not half so much indignity to religion, as he doth. For,

1st. The hypocrite calls in God to be a complice and partaker with him in his crimes; and entitles his majesty, who is infinitely pure and holy, to the wickedness he commits, as if they were done for his sake, and merely upon his account: and so makes God to be the patron of sin, who will be the judge and condemner of sinners.

All his injustice, rapine, and rebellion are coloured over with the fair pretences of the glory of God, the interest of the kingdom of Christ, the advancement of the power of godliness, reformation of idolatry and superstition, &c., and there is no act of fraud or violence, faction or sedition, but he thinks it justified and hallowed by these glorious names: which is nothing else but to rob men, and make God the receiver, who is the detester, and will be the punisher of such crimes. Now the open and flagitious wretch, although he hates God as much as the hypocrite, yet he doth not so much deride him: his wickednesses are plain and avowed: and every one may see, from whence they proceed, and whither they tend; that they come from hell, and directly tend thither: religion is not at all concerned, to colour, but only to condemn them. And, judge ye, which doth most despise God and Godliness: either he, who professeth it not at all; or he, who professeth it only that he may abuse and abase it, and make it subservient to such vile and sordid ends as are infinitely unworthy of it.

2dly. The wound, that religion receives from hypocrites, is far more dangerous and incurable, than that, which the open and scandalous sinner inflicts upon it.

For religion is never brought into question, by the enormous vices of an infamous person; all see and all abhor his lewdness. But, when a man shall have his mouth full of piety and hands full of wickedness, when he shall speak Scripture, and live Devilism, profess strictly and walk loosely: this lays a grievous stumbling-block in the way of others; and tempts them to think, that all re-

ligion is but mockery, and that the professers of it are but hypocrites; and so imbitters their hearts against it, as a solemn cheat put upon the credulous world. Certainly, such men are the causes of all that contempt, which is cast upon the ways and ordinances of God; and their secret profaneness hath given occasion to the gross and open profaneness, that now abounds in the world: and the hypocrisy of former years hath too fatally introduced the atheism of these.

Nay, a hypocrite must needs be an atheist: and in his heart, deny many of God's glorious attributes, but especially his omniscience; and say within himself, as those, Ps. lxxiii. 11, Tush, God shall not know; *and is there knowledge in the Most High?* For did they but believe, that God looks through all their disguises: and that his eye, which is light unto itself, pierceth unto their very souls: did they but seriously consider, that all things are naked and before him; that he knows our thoughts afar off, and is privy to our closest designs: they would not, certainly, be either so daringly wicked, or so childishly foolish, as to plot upon God, and seek to cozen and delude Omniscience.

Now this profaneness of the hypocrite, in seeking temporal things by spiritual pretences, is much more abominable than the profaneness of others, who seek them by unjust and unlawful means: for the one only makes impiety, but the other piety itself an instrument of his vile and sordid profit; than which, there cannot be a greater scorn and contempt put upon religion.

[6] He is a profane person, who makes what God hath sanctified common and unhallowed.

And have we not many such profane persons among us? Many, that abuse the holy and reverend name of God, which ought to be had in the highest esteem and veneration, about light and frivolous matter? who only make mention of him in their idle chat; but are mute and dumb, when any thing should be spoken to his praise? Many, that profane his Sabbaths; and, although God hath liberally allowed them six days for the affairs of earth, yet will not spare the seventh for the affairs of heaven; but impiously invade, what he he hath set apart and consecrated for himself, and his own immediate worship and service? Many, that never speak Scripture, but when they abuse it: making the Bible their jest-book! and prostituting those phrases and expressions which God hath sanctified to convey unto us the knowledge of himself and eternal life, to the laughter and mirth of their loose companions? So that those very words, which the Holy Ghost inspired into the penmen of the Sa-

cred Scripiures for the edification of the Church, the Devil inspires into these wretches for their own damnation, and the damnation of those that have pleasure in such horrid profaneness.

[7] He is a profane person, who despiseth spiritual privileges and enjoyments.

Upon this very account, the Scripture sets that black and indelible brand upon Esau: Heb. xii. 16; *Lest there be any profane person among you, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.* And why is Esau stigmatised as profane, for selling his birthright, but because in those first ages of the world, the firstborn or eldest of the family was a priest, and that sacred function by right of primogeniture belonged unto him? and therefore we read, that the Tribe of Levi were taken by God to be his priests and ministers, in exchange for the first-born. Now to slight and undervalue an office so holy and sacred, a privilege so eminent, a dignity so sublime and spiritual, to part with it only for the satisfying of his hunger, was a sign of a profane spirit; in preferring the God, his belly, before the God of Heaven; and for ever renouncing his right of sacrificing to the True God, only that he might sacrifice one pleasant morsel to his impatient appetite.

And, certainly, if it were so profane in Esau to slight and contemn the priesthood in himself, they are also profane, who vilify it in others: and make those the objects of their lowest scorn and contempt, whose office it is to stand and minister before God and Christ. Certainly if a dishonour done to an ambassador reflects upon the prince that sent him, will not Christ account it as an affront and injury done unto him, when you affiont and injure those his messengers and ambassadors, whom he hath sent to treat with you in his name, and about the concernments of his kingdom?

But, not to speak more of this, lest we should be thought to plead for ourselves: are not those profane, who despise and contemn the high privileges and dignity of the children of God? who despise those, whom God so highly honours, as to adopt them into his own family, to admit them into near communion and endearments with himself, to make them his own sons, and give them the privilege of heirs of eternal glory? Doubtless, he, who despiseth him that is begotten, despiseth him likewise that begetteth; and the common disrespect, which is shown to the servants and children of God, argues a secret contempt of him, who is their Master and their Father.

Now lay these things to your own hearts, and bring them home to your own consciences, and see whether you are in none of these particulars guilty of profaneness. Do none of you think slightly

of religion; accounting it either a politic design, or a needless preciseness? Are none of you negligent in the public worship and service of God; nor yet in private and family duties; or, if you perform them, is it not very carelessly and perfunctorily; or, if you seem zealous in them, is it not your zeal excited by some temporal advantages, and low base worldly ends and designs? Do you not make that common and unhallowed, which God hath made holy; either by abusing his Name, polluting his Sabbaths, or vilifying his Word in your ordinary raillery? And, lastly, do none of you despise spiritual privileges and enjoyments, and those likewise who are invested with them? If so, how fair and specious soever your lives and actions may be, although you may think the rude debauched sinner at a vast distance from yourselves, and account him the only profane person: yet, certainly, this black style belongs as properly to you; and you are profane violators of this First Command, which requires you to take the Lord for your God, and accordingly to honour and reverence him and whatsoever appertains unto him. And, thus much, for the Third Notable Transgression of this Command, Profaneness.

4. The Fourth and last breach of this Command is by *Idolatry:* THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BESIDES ME; which they transgress, who set up any other God besides the Lord Jehovah.

Idolatry, according to its etymology and use, signifies a serving of images or idols. Now, an idol, though it properly signifies an artificial effigy or resemblance made to represent any thing or person; yet, in divinity, it signifies any thing besides the true God, unto which we ascribe divine honour and worship.

And, as an idol is twofold; one, Internal, in the fiction and imagination of the mind; another, External and visible, either the work of men's hands as statues and images, or else the work of God's hands as the sun, moon, and stars, or any other creature: so there is a twofold idolatry; the one, Internal, when in our minds and affections we honour and venerate that as God, which indeed is not so, but is either a creature of the True God, or a fiction of a deluded fancy; the other, External, which we are then guilty of, when we express the inward veneration of our souls, by outward acts of adoration. As for instance: whosoever shall believe the consecrated bread in the Sacrament to be transubstantiated and changed into the true and proper body of Jesus Christ, and, upon this belief, shall in his mind revere and honour it as his God, as the Papists do, he is guilty of Internal Idolatry: but if, to this internal veneration, he add any external rites of worship, as prostration, invocation, &c., he is then likewise guilty of External Idolatry.

It is the former of these two kinds of Idolatry, which is here prohibited in this First Commandment: THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME; that is, thou shalt not give unto anything, either in heaven or earth, that inward heart-worship of affiance, love, fear, veneration, and dependence, which is due only to the True God, the Lord Jehovah.

The imperate acts, or outward expressions of this inward worship, are that, which we call External Idolatry, which is specially forbidden in the Second Commandment: of which I shall treat, in its place and order.

Now concerning this Internal Idolatry, observe these following propositions.

(1) Whosoever acknowledgeth, and in his heart worshippeth another God, different from that God, who hath revealed himself unto us in his Holy Scriptures, he is guilty of this Internal Idolatry, and the breach of this First Commandment.

And, therefore, not only those miserable creatures, who worship the Devil: or those, that have recourse to diabolical arts and charms: or those, who worship men, whose vices were their ἀποθέωσις, and their crimes their consecration; as Bacchus, and Venus, and others of the heathenish Gods: nor those, who worshipped men famous for their virtues; as the heathens did their heroes, and the papists do their saints; nor those, who worship any of the creatures of God; as the host of heaven, fire as the Persians, or water as the Egyptians, or the creatures of art, as statues and images, as if possessed and animated by their Deities; in which respect Trismegistus called images the bodies of the Gods: * and with the same madness are the Papists possessed, who are persuaded that God, and Christ, and the saints dwell in certain images made to represent them, and by those images give answers to their votaries, and perform many wonderful and miraculous works; whereas, if there be any spirit that possesseth them, as perhaps there may, we have reason to believe, that, since their worship of them is the very same with the heathens, those spirits are likewise the same, viz., not God, nor saints, but devils and damned spirits. But, I say, not only these are idolaters and transgressors of this First Command, but those also, who compound a God partly out of the figment of their own erroneous minds, and partly out of his own infinite attributes: and thus are all Arians, Socinians, and Antitrinitarians guilty of idolatry; for they acknowledge one infinite and eternal being, but, denying the Persons of the Son and the Holy Ghost, they worship an idol, and not the True God, for the only True God, is both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

* Aug. de Civ. Dei. l. viii. c. 23.

(2) Whosoever acknowledgeth, and in his heart worshippeth more Gods than the only Lord Jehovah, is guilty of idolatry, and the violation of this First Commandment.

Thus was the idolatry of those nations, which the king of Assyria planted in Israel, after he had carried away the Ten Tribes into captivity: for it is said, 2 Kings xvii. 33, *That they feared the Lord, and served their own Gods.* And, upon this account also, are all, Arians and Socinians, who deny the natural divinity of Jesus Christ, justly charged with idolatry: for since they say that Christ is God, and do worship him as God, yet deny that he is of the same nature and substance with the Lord Jehovah, they must of necessity make more Gods than one, and those of a diverse essence and being; and, therefore, are not only guilty of blasphemy, but idolatry: of blasphemy, in robbing Christ of his Eternal Sonship, and the Divine Nature; of idolatry, in attributing divine honour and worship unto him, whom they believe to be but a creature, and not God by nature.

(3) Whosoever doth ascribe or render to any creature that which is proper and due only unto God, he is an idolater, and guilty of the transgression of this First Commandment.

Now this attribution of the divine properties to the creatures, is either explicit or implicit: explicit, when we do avow the attributes of the divine nature to be in those things, which are not capable of them; as those, who hold the body of Christ, to be omnipresent: implicit, when we render unto any creature that inward worship, esteem, and affection, which is due only unto the infinite perfections of the Deity.

And, although our Reformed Religion be well purged from the former idolatry; yet, certainly, the professors of it are not well purged from this latter idolatry: for, even among Protestants themselves, we shall find very many that are in this sense idolaters. For,

[1] Whosoever chiefly and supremely loves any creature, is an idolater; because our chiefest love is due only unto God.

Hence the covetous person is expressly called an idolater; and covetousness, idolatry: Col. iii. 5; *Mortify your* earthly *members; uncleanness .... evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* And the sensual epicure is likewise an idolater: Phil. iii. 19, his *belly*, saith the Apostle, is his God. The proud person is an idolater: for he loves himself supremely; sets up himself for his own idol; and falls prostrate before that image, which he hath pourtrayed of his own perfections, in his own fancy and imagination. And, generally, all such, who love and admire anything above God, or esteem anything so dear that they would not willingly part with

it for his sake, have set up another God before him, to which they give that service and respect which is due only to the Great God of Heaven.

[2] Whosoever puts his trust and confidence in any creature more than in God, is guilty of this inward heart-idolatry.

As when we depend upon interest, or power, or policy for our safeguard and success, more than on that God, who is able both with and without created helps and means to relieve us. And that we do so appears, when we are secure and confident in the enjoyment of such created comforts and supports; but altogether diffident and dejected, when we are deprived of them: for since God is always the same, we should likewise have the same courage and spirit, did we place our whole affiance in him.

[3] He is an idolater, and a very gross one, who sets up any creature in his heart, whether saint or angel, to pray unto it, and to betake himself unto that vain refuge in his straits and necessities.

For invocation properly belongs to God alone: as an act of worship, which he hath challenged to himself; and the highest glory, that we can give to his Divine Majesty. And, therefore, he hath commanded us, Ps. l. 15, *Call upon me,* not upon any saint or angel, *in the* time *of trouble,* and *I will deliver thee.* And, therefore, the Papists are most gross and stupid idolaters, who direct their petitions, not unto God, but unto saints and angels: which is nothing else but to advance them into his throne, and to ascribe unto them his infinite perfections; for prayer and adoration suppose the object of it to be omnipresent and omnipotent, omnipresent to hear, and omnipotent to save, or else they are in vain.

Thus much for the First Commandment.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing, that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

IDOLATRY is twofold.

Either spiritual and internal, residing in the affections and disposition of the soul; which we are guilty of, when we devote our supreme love, fear, and dependence unto any created being, which are due only unto the True and Only God. And this idolatry is forbidden in the First Commandment, as we have already seen.

Or, else, it is more gross and external, consisting in a visible adoration of anything besides God; who, as he challengeth the affections of the soul, so requires also the homage and reverence of our bodies, in those services which we perform unto him. And this idolatry is particularly forbidden in this Second Commandment, which I have now read unto you. In which we have these three parts: —

I. The PRECEPT itself, which runs negatively, and is branched forth into two several prohibitions; but both tending to the same end and effect: the one forbidding images to be made, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything;* the other forbidding them to be worshipped, *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.*

II. Here is added a severe COMMINATION against those, that shall presume to violate this Command: *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.*

III. Here is likewise for the encouragement of obedience, the addition of a gracious PROMISE, of *Shewing mercy unto thousands, that love* God *and keep* his *commandments.*

I. I shall begin with the COMMAND, or PROHIBITION: which is twofold: Thou shalt not make images: Thou shalt not worship them. Not that the carver's or painter's art, but only the people's idolatry; not the ingenuity in making, but the stupidity in worshipping, those dumb representations; is here forbidden. The brazen serpent in the wilderness, the cherubims, and other resemblances in the temple, are a sufficient proof and evidence of this.

This prohibition, therefore, must be interpreted according to the subject matter which is here spoken of; and that being only divine worship, it is plain, that it is not unlawful to represent to the eye any visible thing by an artificial image of it: but only when God saith, *Thou shalt not make,* and *Thou shalt not worship,* the meaning is, Thou shalt not make anything, with an intention of worship; and, Thou shalt not worship anything, which thou or others have made. But, concerning the prohibition of this command, I shall speak more hereafter.

For the more full and clear understanding of this precept, I must

desire you to recal to mind one of those several general rules which I formerly gave you, as helpful to instruct you in the due extent and latitude of the Commandments; and that was, That the negative commands do all of them include the injunction of the contrary positive duties: as, when God forbids the taking of his name in vain by consequence he commands the hallowing and sanctifying of his name; where he forbids murder, he commands all lawful care and endeavour to preserve our own, and the life of others; where, in the First Precept, he forbids the owning and cleaving unto any other God besides himself, he enjoins us to acknowledge him as our God, to love, fear, and hope in him only. So, here in this Second Command, where he forbids the worshipping of images, by consequence he requires us to worship him according to the rules which he hath prescribed us. And, therefore, as under the First Command is comprehended whatsoever appertains to the Internal Worship of God; so, under this Second, is comprehended whatsoever appertains to the External and Visible Worship of God.

Here, I shall, first, speak concerning the External Worship of God; and, then, of those Sins, which are contrary unto it, and condemned in this Commandment.

i. Concerning the WORSHIP OF GOD, I shall lay down the following propositions:

1. *The true and spiritual Worship of God, in the general, is an action of a pious soul, wrought and excited in us by the Holy Ghost; whereby, with godly love and fear we serve God acceptably, according to his will revealed in his Word: by faith embracing his promises, and in obedience performing his commands; to his glory, the edification of others, and our own eternal salvation.*

This is the true spiritual worship of the True God, who is a spirit: and it comprehends in it both the inward worship of our hearts and souls, and likewise the outward worship of holy and religious performances; of which I am now particularly to treat.

2. Therefore, this *External Worship of God is a sacred action of a pious soul, wrought and excited by the Holy Ghost; whereby, with all reverence, we serve God both in words and deeds, according to his revealed will, in partaking of his sacraments, attending on his ordinances, and performing those holy duties which he hath required from us; to his glory, the edification of others, and our own eternal salvation.*

This worship of God, although it be external, is nevertheless spiritual: for it proceeds from the Spirit of God exciting our spirits to the performance of it; and is directed by a spiritual rule, unto a spiritual end, the glory of God and our own salvation.

3. *The parts of this external worship are divers and manifold: whereof the most principal and essential are the celebration of the sacraments, solemn prayer, and solemn praise and thanksgiving.*

But, besides these, there be many other things, which belong to the service of God; yea, as many as there are duties of religion and piety: such are a free, open, and undaunted profession of the truth; a religious vowing unto God things that are lawful, and in our own power; an invoking of the testimony of God to the truth of what we assert, or to the faithful discharge of what we promise, when we are duly called to do it by lawful authority; a diligent reading of the word of God, and a constant and reverent attendance on it when it is read and preached; and divers other duties, too long to be here particularly enumerated: some of which belong to the proper worship of God, immediately as parts of it; others, mediately as means and helps to it.

4. *Although God doth especially delight in the acts of our internal worship, and principally regards the esteem and veneration that we have for his great and glorious Majesty in our hearts; yet this alone sufficeth not, without the performance of those parts of external worship and visible acts of piety and religion, which may to the glory of God express the devout dispositions of our souls.*

The inward acts of piety are those of faith, in believing; of hope, in expecting our reward; of charity, in loving both God and our neighbour; of fear, in reverencing him; of patience, in a contented bearing whatsoever burdens it shall please the All-wise Providence of God to lay upon us; and of a cheerful willingness, to perform all the duties of obedience when he enjoins us. These belong to the internal worship and service of God, and are especially pleasing and acceptable unto him. And, indeed, without these, all other acts of worship are both dead and unsavoury: for, as the spirit of a man is his life, so the eternal and spiritual piety of the heart, our love, fear, and reverence of God is the life of all our duties, without which they are but as a dead carcase; so far from being a sweet smelling savour, that they are noisome and offensive to that God to whom we offer them.

But of this Internal Worship I have already spoken.

That, which we are now to consider, is the External Worship of God, which he hath absolutely required from us, when we have ability and opportunity to perform it.

For, although there need no overt-actions to make the sincerity of our affections and intentions known unto God; yet it is necessary, for his glory and the good example of others, to declare that to

the world by visible signs and expressions, which was before known unto him in the secret purposes and thoughts of our hearts. For,

(1) God hath no less strictly enjoined his External Worship, than he hath his Internal.

What can be more external, than the ceremonial part of the Evangelical Law, the participation of Baptism and the Lord's Supper? Both of which are yet most expressly commanded: Matt. xxviii. 19; *Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Acts ii. 38; *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ.* And for the communion of the body and blood of Christ, see Luke xxii. 19, *Do this in remembrance of me:* which command they do heinously violate, and refuse to give the most evident sign and tessera that they are Christians, who either totally neglect, or else very seldom attend this most holy and spiritual ordinance.

(2) We find that God doth severely both threaten and punish such, as give External Worship unto any other but himself.

How often are the Israelites reproved, for bowing the knee to Baal, for baking cakes to the Queen of Heaven! Yea, and very usually idolatry is set forth in Scripture, by some of those visible actions, which some of these false worshippers used to express their devotion towards their false deities. As, bowing the body unto them: Josh. xxiii. 16. *Served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them:* Judges ii. 12, 17, &c. Kissing the hand unto them, in token of reverence: Job xxxi. 26, 27; *If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.* So, likewise, bowing the knee to any idol, and kissing it: Hos. xiii. 2; *Let the men, that sacrifice, kiss the calves.* And so, when Elijah complained of the total defection of the Israelites from the service of the True God unto idolatry, God, to comfort and encourage him, tells him, that he alone was not singular, but that there were *seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that* had *not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which* had *not kissed him:* 1 Kings xix. 18. And therefore, certainly, since he makes so punctual a computation of those, who had not alienated the bodily worship to the service of an idol, he doth respect and accept those, who in faith and sincerity tender it to himself.

(3) God hath created the Whole Man, both Soul and Body for Himself, and he sustains both in their being; and, therefore, he expects homage and service from both: from the soul, as the chief seat of worship; from the body, as the best testimony of it.

(4) Not only our Souls, but our Bodies too are Redeemed by Christ; and, therefore, both should be employed in his worship and service.

The whole man is bought with a price: the whole is justified: the whole is sanctified. Yea, our very bodies are said to be the temples of the Holy Ghost: 1 Cor. vi. 19. And where should God be worshipped, or that worship appear, but in his temple? And, therefore, upon the account of that purchase, which Christ hath made of us to himself, the Apostle draws this inference, in the aforementioned place: *Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: wherefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

(5) The Body is likewise to partake of the Blessings of Obedience, and therefore it is but reasonable it should partake of the Service of Obedience.

Many blessings are promised to our outward man, here in this life; and, hereafter, it is to be made a glorious and incorruptible body, like unto the body of our Lord Jesus Christ: it is to be clothed with light, and crowned with rays; never more to suffer injuries without, or diseases within: and therefore, certainly, duty belongs to it, since so many great and unspeakable privileges belong unto it.

Thus you see how reasonably God requires from us the service, not only of the inward, but of the outward man: and, therefore, we are not to slight that outward reverence, which is necessary to testify a due sense of his glorious presence when we come before him: neither must we rob him of any part, either of his service, or of his servant, but sacrifice ourselves entirely unto him; our bodies upon the altar of our souls, hearts, and affections; and both soul and body upon that altar, which alone can make both acceptable, even the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a Fourth Position.

5. *All that outward reverence, which we show towards God in his worship and service, must be measured and estimated according to the customs and usage of places and countries;* so that what they use as a sign and expression of honour to their superiors, they ought much more to use in the presence of the Great God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. And, therefore, uncovering of the head, bowing of the body, an humble submiss and settled composure of the whole man, which, among us are but fitting signs of respect and reverence when we appear in the presence of those who are much our superiors, ought likewise to be used by us in the presence of God, who is infinitely such: not, indeed, that they are essential parts of worship; but signs and testimonies of it.

6. The last position is this: *We ought not to worship God with any*

any other external worship, than what himself hath commanded and appointed us in his Holy Word. The Scripture hath set us our bounds for worship, to which we must not add, and from which we ought not to diminish: for whosoever doth either the one or the other, must needs accuse the rule, either of defect in things necessary, or of superfluity in things unnecessary: which is a high affront to the wisdom of God; who, as he is the object, so he is the prescriber of all that worship, which he will accept and reward.

I well know that this rule hath given (I cannot say cause, but) occasion to many hot disputes about Ecclesiastical Rites and Constitutions: some condemning whatsoever is prescribed or used in the service of God, besides things expressly commanded in Scripture, for enroachments upon the authority of God, and additions unto his worship, which he requires to be performed according to the pattern in the mount, and the model he hath delineated for it: others, again, maintaining the privilege and authority of the Church, in ordaining some things for the more decent and reverent performing of the service of God, which are not particularly required in the Holy Scriptures.

I shall not plunge myself into this angry and quarrelsome controversy: only give me leave to say, and sadly to lament, That the seamless-coat of Christ is rent in pieces among them, whilst some think it more decent to sew on loops and fringes to it, and others will have none. And, truly, I think our differences are of no greater importance in themselves, though too woeful in their consequents, than this amounts unto. I shall clearly express my sense of this matter in a few words, without any reflection or bitterness; and so leave it to the judgment of every ordinary discretion.

Things, which belong to the worship of God, may be considered either as Parts of that worship, or only as Circumstances and Modifications of it.

(1) First, therefore: Whatsoever is imposed on us as a substantial Part of the worship of God, if it be not expressly required of us in the Holy Scriptures, is to be not only refused, but abominated: for this is a plain addition to what God hath commanded; and, by it, we lay an imputation upon him, as though he wanted wisdom to ordain what is necessary for his own service.

Then, and then only, is any constitution of man imposed for a part of divine worship, when obedience unto it is urged upon us, not only from the authority enjoining it, but also from the necessity of the thing considered simply and nakedly in its own nature. For, as it is with God's laws, some things are commanded because they

are good, and some things are good only because they are commanded; so is it with laws and impositions of men about matters of religion and worship: some things they command us to observe, because they are in themselves necessary antecedently to their command, as enjoined us before by God; and therefore this is no ordinance or doctrine of man, but of God; unto which the magistrate, who is the guardian of both tables, doth well to add the sanction of secular rewards and punishments: other things are necessary for our observance, only because they are commanded by their authority, to whom we owe conscientious obedience in things lawful and indifferent. But we utterly deny, that the imposition of any such things makes them any parts of worship, of which they are only circumstances; or that these observances are necessary to us, or acceptable to God antecedently to the command of authority; or that the worship of God were imperfect, defective, unacceptable, and invalid to the ends for which it is appointed, were not these observances commanded, and performed. If, indeed, we thought otherwise, the bitterest of all their invectives, and the loudest of all their exclamations in calling our worship, superstition, will-worship, and idolatry, would not show so much passion, as a just and rational zeal. But, God for ever forbid, that any such ordinances of man should be introduced into our Church. We all join in this vote; and do utterly renounce any such authority, and deny any such practice. We usurp not upon the consciences of any; nor endeavour to persuade them that that is in itself necessary, which is not so by God's commands, or the law of nature; or that that is unlawful, which is not condemned by either. We endeavour to keep ourselves and you as much from a Positive, as a Negative Superstition. We endeavour to put due bounds between things simply necessary, either by the command of God or their own natural reason and goodness, and such as are in themselves indifferent. We say, that nothing is a part of worship, but what belongs to the former; but some things that belong to the latter may be used in worship as fit and decent circumstances: and, when such things are imposed, they become necessary; not indeed in themselves, for no human authority can alter the nature of things, but to our practice, and our consciences are obliged to them. But, how? not indeed simply and absolutely, so that it shall never be lawful to omit them: but only in two cases; in case of scandal, and contempt. We ought not to omit them, if we judge any offence will be taken by others at our neglect: we ought not to omit them at any time, out of a contempt and disrespect towards them.

And thus you see we put a vast difference between that, which is a part of worship, and that, which is but a circumstance of worship: if any thing be commanded us by men, as a part of worship, which is not commanded us by God, we ought not to submit unto it. But,

(2) If any thing be imposed on us, not as a part of worship, but as a Circumstance and Modification of worship, we may and we ought to submit unto it

[1] If the things so imposed be in themselves lawful and honest: which they are, if not condemned by the Scripture.

[2] If they tend to order and decency in the Church. Of which, certainly, they are as fit to be judges, who have authority both in Church and State, as every private, and perhaps less-knowing Christian.

[3] If they are imposed by the command of a lawful power; to whom we ought to submit, in all things, that are lawful.

[4] If they are such, as, neither for their levity nor number, eat out or distract the seriousness and devotion of our spiritual worship: which I think cannot justly be imputed to the observances of our Church; being very few for number, and very grave and modest for use.

If such things as these be imposed upon us, the worship of God is not thereby either changed or adulterated; neither is there any addition made unto it: but the substance of that worship is still in conformity to God's laws, when yet the outward and indifferent manner of it is in conformity to man's. Certainly, it is no addition to Baptism, to give a name to the baptized; though we find no express command for it. And I much wonder among our carping brethren, some or other had not scrupled this, as well as another observance. It is no addition to the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, to appoint at what hour they shall be celebrated, or in what garment, or in what decent posture; for all these things are extrinsical to the worship of God, and fall under the cognizance and direction of our superiors.

Certainly, did we but rightly weigh what is required as a part of worship, and what only as a circumstance of worship, a great deal of heat, and contention, and uncharitable prejudice would be removed and prevented. It is true, our Saviour, Matt. xv. 9, condemns the Scribes and Pharisees, that taught *for doctrines the commandments of men:* that is, they taught those things, which were but the traditions and ordinances of their elders, to be in themselves absolutely necessary to the serving and worshipping of God. But, certainly, this reproof falls not upon those, who, though they do

enjoin what they judge fit for order, yet do not teach them for doctrines; and are so far from thinking their commandments an essential part of worship, that they would abhor and anathematize all those that do so. Necessary they are to be submitted unto, and practised; because enjoined by that authority, to which God hath committed the care of the First Table, as well as the Second: but not necessary in themselves, as any part of the worship and service of God, without which, although they were not imposed by men, it would be unacceptable to him. And whosoever thinks so, let him be accursed

And, now that I have delivered my judgment without bitterness, give me leave to make some few lamentations, in the grief and bitterness of my soul. Is it not to be bitterly lamented, that, in a Reformed and Orthodox Church, there should be such schisms, rents, and divisions: altar against altar, pulpit against pulpit, and one congregation against another? And what is all this contention and separation for? Oh, they will tell you, it is for the purity of religion; for the true and sincere worship of God: that they may serve him purely, without human additions or inventions. Thus goes the cry: and a company of poor ignorant well-meaning souls, because it is very demurely and gravely spoken, take it up, and join with it, never examining the grounds and bottom of it; but conclude, that these must needs be in the right, who complain of corruptions, and pretend to a happy and glorious reformation. Alas, my Brethren, was there ever any schism in the world, that did not plead the same? Did not others, upon the same pretences, separate from their communion, upon which they now separate from ours? And may not the same argument serve to crumble them into infinite fractions and subdivisions; till, at last, we come to have almost as many churches as men, and scarce a man constant and coherent to himself?

But what is it, in our worship, which they dislike? The substantials of it are all the same with their own. We utterly disavow, that we make that any part of worship, which the Scripture hath not: and I think that man very much forsaken of reason and common understanding, who shall endeavour to persuade us, that we intend worship, when we ourselves most earnestly and seriously profess the contrary

Is it then that we differ about mere accidents and circumstances? I confess we do: but assert, withal, that these things are not a just cause of separation from us.

If we look back upon the Primitive Times, we shall find that

almost every Church had its different rites and observances; * and, yet, under that diversity, maintained unity and communion. Yea, and at this day, the Reformed Churches observe different customs one from another; and yet they inviolably hold communion together, and we with them. The Gallican, Belgic, Helvetian, and German churches reject us not, nor we them; although we differ, in rites and discipline, and those things which are left to the prudence of every Church to constitute as they shall judge most necessary for order and edification.

Now, certainly, if these different rites and observances be no ground for the National Church to separate from the communion of another, they can be no ground for private persons to separate from the communion of that Church to which they belonged. Nay, although they might, with reason, dislike many usages, either as frivolous or incongruous: yet it becomes the temper and modesty of a pious Christian, in things merely circumstantial, to submit his practice to the judgment of that authority under which he lives; and not to separate from the communion of the Church, to forsake its assemblies, to disown its administrations, only because he thinks some things might be more conveniently ordered, according to the model of his own or other men's apprehensions: which, in the folly and sad consequences of it, would be to act like him who took up a beetle, and struck with all his force to kill a fly that he saw on his friend's forehead. What else were this, but to rend the body of Christ by an angry contending about the fashion of its garments; and to tear away its limbs, by a violent striving to strip off those clothes which they think indecent.

For my part, I freely profess, that were my lot cast among any of the Reformed Churches beyond the seas, I would presently join in their communion, and not at all scruple to conform myself to their received customs; although, perhaps, in my own private persuasions, I may judge some of them to be less serious and less reverent than those of the Church of England, which are now so passionately decried and condemned. I have ever venerated that oracular advice of St. Ambrose to St. Austin: † "If thou wilt nei-

* *Alii jejunant Sabbato; alii verò non: alii quotidie communicant corpori et sanguini Dominico; alii certis diebus accipiunt: alibi nullus dies intermittitur quo non offeratur; alibi Sabbato tantùm et Dominico.* Aug. Ep. ad Januarium. Ep. 118.

† *Nec disciplina ulla est in his melior gravi prudentique Christiano, quàm ut eo modo agat, quo agere viderit Ecclesiam ad quamcunque fortè devenerit. Quod enim neque contra fidem, neque contra bonos mores injungitur, indifferenter est habendum; et, pro eorum inter quos vivitur societate, servandum est.—Mater mea, Mediolanum me consecuta, invenit Ecclesiam Sabbato non jejunantem: ceperit perturbari, et fluctuare quid agerit*

ther give offence, nor take offence, conform thyself to all the lawful customs of the Churches where thou comest."

But I will not farther enlarge on this choleric and touchy controversy: only I pray, that our wanton dissensions, about these less important matters, may not provoke God to deprive us of the substance and essentials of our religion; and reduce us to such a condition, wherein we should be heartily glad, could we enjoy the liberty of the Gospel and the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, under any of those forms of administration, which are now so furiously debated amongst us. It were just with God to extinguish the light of his Gospel, when we use it not to work by; but all our study and strife is how to snuff it.

And thus much, in the general, touching the External Worship of God required in this Commandment.

ii. The SINS FORBIDDEN by it are two: Contempt of the worship of God; and Superstition in performing it.

Concerning the former, I have already spoken largely, in giving you the Characters of a Profane Person.

I shall, therefore, at present speak only of Superstition.

Concerning the etymology of the word, both Tully and Lactantius are agreed, that it is derived from *superstites;* "Survivors:" but about the reason of the notion they much differ. Tully saith,* *Qui totos dies precabantur et immolabant, ut sibi sui liberi superstites essent, superstitiosi sunt appellati:* i. e. "They, who immoderately prayed and sacrificed, that their children might survive them." But Lactantius is not content with this reason; and therefore gives another:† *Superstitiosi autem vocantur, non qui filios suos superstites optant; omnes enim optamus: sed aut ii, qui superstitem memoriam defunctorum colunt; aut qui parentibus suis superstites, celebrant imagines eorum domi tanquam Deos Penates:* i. e. "Men were called superstitious, not from desiring that their children might survive them: but because they celebrated the surviving memory of the dead; or because that surviving their parents they worshipped their images as their Household Gods."

cùm ego talia non curabam; sed, propter ipsam, consului de hâc re beatissimæ memoriæ virum Ambrosium: respondit se nihil docere me posse nisi quod ipse faceret; quia si melius nosset, id potiùs observaret. Cùmque ego putassem, nullâ redditâ ratione, autoritate solâ suâ, nos voluisse admonere ne Sabbato jejunaremus, subsecutus est et ait mihi: Cumni Romam venio, jejuno Sabbato: cùm hic sum, non jejuno. Sic etiam tu, ad quam fortè Ecclesiam veneris, ejus morem serva, si cuiquam nonvis esse scandalo, nec quenquam tibi.—Ego verò de hâc sententiâ etiam atque etiam cogitans, ita semper habui tanquam eam cœlesti oraculo susceperim. Aug. ad Jan. Ep. 118.

* Cicero de Nat. Deor. lib. ii.

† Lactant. Instit. lib. iv. c. 28.

But, whatsoever be the etymology of the word, we may take this short description of it: That it is a needless and erroneous fear, in matters of religion.

And this is twofold: either Negative or Positive.

Negative Superstition is, when men do fearfully abstain from and abhor those things as wicked and abominable, which God hath not forbidden, and therefore are in themselves lawful and harmless. And those, who are bigotted with this superstition, will be sure to cry out against all that do observe such things as they condemn, for miserably seduced and superstitious souls. Which is the exact humour of the men of our days; who, as Diogenes is said to have trampled upon Plato's pride with far greater pride, so these exclaim against superstition with far greater superstition. For superstition is not, either the observing, or not observing of such things; but the doing of either with an erroneous fear, lest God should be displeased and provoked if we did otherwise. He is, therefore, negatively superstitious, who makes the not doing of that, which is lawful and harmless, a matter of conscience and of religion.

Positive Superstition is, when men do fearfully observe and perform those things, which either are forbidden, or at least no where commanded by God. Or, if you will, it is a restless fear of the mind, putting men upon acts of religion, which are not due or not convenient.

This Positive Superstition expresseth itself two ways. For, sometimes it gives divine honours to that, which is not God: and, sometimes, it performs needless and superfluous services to the True God. Both these are the effects of superstition: but are commonly known by their proper names; the one being Idolatry, and the other Will-worship. And both these are forbidden in this Commandment.

1. *Idolatry* is a part and species of superstition.

So we find it expressly, Acts xvii. 16, compared with verse 22. In the 16th it is said, that Paul's *spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city* of Athens *wholly given to idolatry.* And in the 22d it is said, that Paul reproved them as being *too superstitious.* And, therefore, though all superstition be not idolatry, yet all idolatry is superstition; yea, and the blackest kind of it.

Now idolatry is nothing else, but the giving of religious worship unto an idol. And an idol is not only an artificial image or representation of anything, whether real or fictitious, set up to be worshipped; but any creature of God, whether angels or men, sun, or moon, or stars, &c., to which we give any religious honour and service. The worshipping of any creature, whether in heaven above,

or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth, is idolatry; which is particularly and by name forbidden in this Commandment.

And, indeed, this is a sin so absurd and stupid, that it is a wonder it should ever be so bewitching, as to inveigle the far greater part of the world. The prophet Isaiah doth very frequently deride the folly and madness of idolaters; especially Chap. xliv. 16; *He burneth part* of his wooden god *in the fire: he roasteth* his meat with it, *and is satisfied: he warmeth himself: and the residue thereof he maketh a God: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my God.* A most gross and bestial stupidity! as if there were more divinity in one end of a stick, than the other. And yet a sin most strangely bewitching: after which, all the heathen world ran a whoring; and from which, all the remonstrances and threatenings, which God makes to his own people of Israel, could not restrain them. Yea, and so strangely besotting is it, that a very great part, even of those who profess the name and doctrine of Jesus Christ, are most foully guilty of it: I mean the Papists: who, to hide their shame in this particular from the notice of the people, have covered it with a greater; and thought fit rather to expunge this Second Commandment than to leave their image-worship to be censured and condemned by it. For, in all their catechisms and books of devotion, which they have published for the use of the vulgar, they have sacrilegiously omitted this Second Commandment; as fearing that the evidence of it would convict and condemn them of idolatry, in the consciences of the most ignorant and illiterate that should but hear it rehearsed.

Let us now proceed to consider, who may justly be condemned of idolatry, and the violation of this precept.

(1) He is an idolater, that prays unto any Saint or Angel.

For he ascribes that unto the creature which is an honour due only unto God the Creator. Our faith and our invocation ought to be terminated in the same object: Rom. x. 14; *How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?* And, therefore, if we cannot, without blasphemy, say, that we believe in such a saint or angel; neither can we, without idolatry, pray unto that saint or angel.

(2) The most execrable idolatry that is, is that of entering into League and Correspondence with the Devil: to consult and invoke him; and, by any wicked arts, implore or make use of his help and assistance.

And, of this are those guilty in the highest degree, who enter into any express compact with the Devil; which is always ratified with some homage of worship given to him. And, in a secondary

and more low degree, those who apply themselves to seek help from such forlorn wretches, as use traditionary charms and incantations, or any vain observances, to free them from pain and diseases, or other troubles that molest them. For all those things, which have not a natural efficiency to produce that effect for which they are used, may very reasonably be suspected to have been agreed on formerly between the Devil and some of his especial servants, and that all the virtue they retain is only from that compact: which as it was explicit in those that made it, so it is implicit in those that use them; for they still act in the power of that first stipulation and agreement.

(3) Whosoever bows down his body in religious Adoration of any Image, or other Creature, is guilty of idolatry; and doth most expressly transgress the very letter of this Command. *Thou shalt not bow down before them, nor worship them.*

It is but here a vain refuge, unto which the Papists betake themselves, when they excuse themselves from being guilty of idolatry, because, although they worship images, yet they worship the True God by them For,

[1] They worship the images of very many creatures, both men and angels.

For me now to examine their evasion concerning λατρειδουλια, and υπερδουλια, would perhaps be as improper in this auditory, as the distinction itself is vain and frivolous.

[2] Whereas, they pretend to worship the True God by an image, we reply, That it is most impious to attempt to represent God by any visible resemblance; and therefore much more to worship him, could he be so represented. For God, who is infinite, cannot be circumscribed by lines and lineaments; and, being invisible, cannot be resembled. And, therefore, God doth again and again inculcate it upon the Israelites, that, when he delivered the Law unto them, he appeared not in any shape; that they might not audaciously attempt to delineate him, and so be enticed to idolatry. Thus, Deut. iv. 12, *Ye heard the voice of words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.* And verse 15; *Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire,) Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure.* When therefore they plead, that they worship the Only True God by images; this is no better, than to excuse one horrid sin, by the commission of another.

[3] To worship the True and Only God by an image, is gross idolatry.

This the Papists deny: and place idolatry, in worshipping of images set up to represent false and fictitious Gods; or, else, in worshipping them with a belief that they themselves are gods. But,

1st. Upon the same account the Israelites were not idolaters, in worshipping the Golden Calf.

For they were not so brutish, as to belief that the calf itself to be their God. Nay, it is most evident, that they intended to worship the True God under that representation. See Exod. xxxii. 4, *These be thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* They could not be so stupid, as to think that that very calf, which they themselves had made, had delivered them from Egypt; but they worshipped the True God, who had given them that great deliverance, under this hieroglyphic sign and resemblance: which appears, verse 5: *Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord:* in the original it is Jehovah, the proper and incommunicable name of the True God. And yet, that this worship of theirs, although directed unto the True God, was horrid idolatry, the Scripture abundantly testifies, verse 32; *Oh this people have sinned a great sin.* 1 Cor. x. 7; *Neither be ye idolatrous, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.* Acts. vii. 41; *They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol.*

2dly. Micah and his mother were certainly guilty of idolatry, in making and worshipping their images: and, yet, that they were made to be symbolical representations of the True God, and erected to this very purpose that he might be worshipped by them, appears clearly from the history, as we have it recorded, Judges xvii. 3; *I had wholly dedicated,* saith she, *the silver unto the Lord,* (*Jehovah* Heb.) *for my son to make a graven image and a molten image.* Which when he had done, he hired a Levite to be his priest. And, in confidence of the reward of so much piety, concludes, verse 13, that, certainly, now the Lord Jehovah would bless him, and do him good. Nothing can be clearer, than that all this worship was intended by him to the True and Only God; yet, being performed by images, it was no better than rank idolatry.

3dly. If the Papists, in worshipping the True God by images, be not idolaters; then neither was Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, an idolater, in setting up his calves at Dan and Bethel.

For whosoever rationally considers the occasion and political grounds of this innovation, must needs conclude, that Jeroboam intended not to introduce a new God; which would have made the people to fall faster from him, than tyranny and oppression did from

Rheoboam: but only to set up some visible signs and representations of the True God; and to persuade the people, that they need not go to Jerusalem to seek his presence and to offer their gifts and sacrifices, for the same God was as much present with them in those figures as he was at the temple of Jerusalem between the cherubims.* And therefore we find, that the idolatry of Jeroboam is distinguished from the idolatry of those, who worshipped Baal and other false Gods: see 1 Kings xvi. 31, where God speaks concerning Ahab, *as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he went and served Baal, and worshipped him.* Nay,

4thly. Although some among the heathens might be so grossly stupid, as to suppose the images themselves to be Gods, and so to worship them; yet their wise and learned philosophers were far enough from such a senseless error: yea, they were forced to use as many distinctions, and subtle evasions concerning their worshipping of images, as now the Papists do; and truly most of them are the very same, and seem but borrowed out of the schools of the Heathens.

But especially they insist on this: That they venerated not their statues, as they were made of such or such materials; but only as they were the houses and bodies of God, where his presence resided, and by which his power was manifested: that they worshipped not the visible sign; but the invisible Deity by it.†

And what doth the Papist say more than this? viz., That they worship the images of God, not as if they were themselves God; but only as they are the visible signs and symbols of the divine presence: and so all their worship is directed unto God through them.

So that, in matters of Idolatry, I profess I can find no difference at all between Heathens and Papists: for, as the more learned Papists do profess that they worship the True God by the image; so, likewise, did the more learned Heathens.‡ And, for the ignorant and vulgar Papists, I am very apt to suspect that they do, as the ignorant Heathen, terminate and limit their worship in the very

* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. viii. c. 3.

† *Non hoc visibile colo; sed numen, quod in illis invisibiliter habitat. Et qui videbantur sibi purgatioris esse religionis, dicebant: Nec simulachrum, nec dæmonium colo; sed, per effigiem corporalem, ejus rei signum intueor quam colere debeo.* Arnob. lib. vi.

‡ Dio Chrysostom. Orat. 12. de Prima Dei Notitia.—Τες γαρ ειμη παντη νηπιος ταυτα ηγει τους θης αλλα θεων αναθηματα και αγαλματα. Celsus: Orig. Cont. Cels. lib. vii. Where he likewise proves, that it is lawful to make images of God, because, according to the doctrine of Christians themselves, God made man according to his own image: the very argument urged by the Papists, and made use of by the Second Council of Nice.

images, before which they fall prostrate; esteeming them to have divine power and virtue of their own: for they are most grossly blinded and infatuated in this their image-worship; and may as well take a stone or a block to be a God, as the great dragon to be a saint: as the poor woman did, who offered one candle to St. Michael, and another to his dragon, that is, the Devil.* And therefore, certainly, if the heathen world were ever guilty of idolatry, so is now the Popish Church; their worship, and all the reasons of it, being as exactly parallel. And, thus much, concerning the first branch of superstition, which is Idolatry.

2. The second is *Will-worship*. Concerning this I shall speak but very little, having already prevented myself.

Now Will-worship is nothing else, but the invention and ascribing any other worship unto God, besides what he hath been pleased to command and institute.

God will not be worshipped according to our fancies, but his own appointment: For, as we must have no other God, besides the true; so that God must have no other service performed unto him, besides what himself hath required and prescribed: for this were to impute folly and weakness unto him, as if, indeed, he would have servants, but knew not what service to enjoin them. And thus we have finished the prohibition, THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE, etc.

Let us now consider the Sanction of this precept; and that is twofold.

First. By denouncing a severe and fearful THREATENING against all those, who should presume to violate this precept: FOR I, THE LORD THY GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN, UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME.

Secondly. By making a gracious PROMISE of mercy to the careful and conscientious observers of this precept: SHEWING MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS OF THEM THAT LOVE ME, AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

II. In the THREATENING we have these things considerable: Who it is, that denounceth it: I, THE LORD THY GOD. What it is, that he denounceth and threatens: TO VISIT THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN. The persons, against whom this threatening is directed: THOSE THAT HATE HIM. And by the context they are such as, contemning the Only True God, prostitute themselves unto idols. The duration and continuance of that vengeance, which he will take upon them: It shall be to THE THIRD

* Estienne Apol. pour Herodote.

AND FOURTH GENERATION. His wrath shall extend to their children, and their children's children.

i. Let us consider WHO IT IS THAT DENOUNCETH THIS THREATENING: I THE LORD THY GOD AM A JEALOUS GOD: so most read the words as our English translation renders them. But others no less rightly read them thus: *For I, the Lord thy God, am strong and jealous:* for the word *El,* which is here used, signifies the mighty God. And according to this acceptation, the words contain in them a description of God.

1. By *his Relation to us: Thy God;* a God, who hath separated thee from all people of the earth, to be his peculiar treasure; who hath brought thee near unto himself, even into the bond of the covenant; who hath betrothed thee in righteousness, and is not only *thy Maker,* but *thy Husband:* as the prophet speaks, Isa. liv. 5.

This God it is, who commands thee faithfully to perform the marriage-vow, that is between thee and him; and not to go a whoring after the vanities of the Gentiles, nor to expose thy shame and nakedness before any false or idol-God: for idolatry is spiritual adultery; and is most frequently set forth under that name and notion, in the Holy Scriptures.

2. Thy God is described by *the Mightiness of his Power.* He is *El kana,* a Strong and Jealous God: able to revenge any dishonour, that is done him by thy unchaste lewdness.

3. He is described by that violent passion, which in men is called *Jealousy: I, the Lord thy God, am strong and jealous.*

Jealousy is an affection or passion of the mind, by which we are stirred up and provoked against whatsoever hinders the enjoyment of that, which we love and desire. The cause and original of it is love; and the effect of it is revenge.

Now God, to deter the Israelites from idolatry, sets forth himself as a Strong and Jealous God, that they might be assured not to escape punishment: for he is strong, and therefore can inflict it; and he is jealous, and therefore will inflict it, if they shall dare to abuse and injure that love which he hath placed upon them.

This jealousy is not to be ascribed unto God, as if there were properly any such weak and disturbing passion in him; but only by way of accommodation and similitude, speaking after the manner of men: so that there is not *idem affectus,* but *idem effectus;* not "the same inward affection," but "the same outward effect." And so, likewise, is it to be understood, when God is said to be angry, to be grieved, to repent, &c., that is, his actions towards us are like the actions of one that is angry, or grieved, or repents: al-

though the Infinite Serenity of the Divine Essence is not liable to be discomposed or ruffled, by the tempests of any such like passions, as are incident to us mutable creatures.

Now the reason why God calls himself here a Jealous God, you will find in these following particulars:

(1) Jealousy is Distrustful and Suspicious.

It dares not rely upon the truth and fidelity of the person of whom we are jealous, but is full of misgiving doubts and fears. And so God (although in propriety of speech, he can doubt nothing, nor fear anything, yet) is pleased to express his jealousy by such speeches, as intimate distrust and diffidence. And, therefore, when the Israelites made that solemn promise to the Lord, Deut. v. 27, *All, that the Lord our God shall* speak unto us, *we will hear it and do it:* God returns answer, as one that misdoubted the real performance of so fair a promise, verse 28, 29; *I have heard the voice of the words of this people .... they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*

(2) Jealousy is Searching and Inquisitive.

It is a hard matter to escape the discovery of a jealous eye; which is still prying and seeking after that, which it would be loth to find. So the eye of the all-seeing and all-knowing God is continually upon us: he critically observes every look, and every kind of glance, that we cast upon ourselves: not the least motion of our hearts, not the least twinkling of our thoughts, can escape his notice and censure. And, of all sins, there is none, that God doth more jealously observe than that of idolatry; for this is the violation of that marriage-faith, which we have plighted to him. And therefore we find that the idolatrous Israelites, as though they were conscious of the great abuse they offered to their *Maker*, their *Husband*, (as the prophet styles God, Isa. liv. 5,) sought out dark and obscure groves to act their wickedness in; that, although they were not chaste, yet they might seem to be cautious. But, in vain is it, to draw the curtains of a thin shade about them: a few leaves could not cover their shame, nor their nakedness from him, who is all eye everywhere, and whose eye is everywhere light to itself: *God is light, and in him* there *is no darkness at all:* 1 John i. 5. It is not possible to conceal from him the prostitution of an unchaste and impudent idolatry. And, therefore saith the Psalmist, Ps. xliv. 20, 21; *If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched* forth *our hands to a* false *god; Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

(3) Jealousy, as it is searching and inquisitive, so it is an Angry and Revengeful Passion.

And, therefore, Solomon calls it, *the rage of a man:* Prov. vi. 34, *Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.* And, Cant. viii. 6, *Jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are* as *coals of fire, which* have *a most vehement flame.* For, as love is the most soft and tender affection of human nature; so jealousy, which is the souring of love, and turning it into vinegar, is the most wild and furious.

Now God is pleased to style himself a Jealous God, to express the heat of his wrath and indignation against sinners. So, Deut. xxix. 20; *The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.* See what dreadful effects this smoking jealousy hath, when it breaks forth into a flame: Zeph. i. 18; *Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.*

And, what signal revenge this devouring jealousy of the Almighty God hath taken upon sinners, the whole world is full of sad instances. This fire hath kindled the eternal and unquenchable flames of hell. When the proud and rebellious angels aspired to be gods, God turned them into devils, and these devils into hell; for his jealousy could not endure to have rivals in his glory. All the ruins and calamities, that have ever happened to persons or nations, are but the effects of God's jealousy against sin. And, of all other sins, his jealousy takes most remarkable vengeance against idolatry: for this is spiritual whoredom; a provocation, which the Jealous God can least endure. See Deut. xxxii. 16, 17, 19; *They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up. And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters.* And, verse 21, *They have moved me to jealousy with that, which is not God: they have provoked me to anger with their vanities. A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.* And so, in the following verses, God exaggerates those sore and heavy judgments, which he would bring upon them in the fury of his jealousy, because of this heinous sin of idolatry.

And thus we have seen in what respects God is said to be a Jealous God.

What remains now, but that expostulation of the Apostle, 1 Cor. x. 22; *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?* We, who are but as dust before the whirlwind, and as dry stubble before the consuming fire, shall we dare by our sins to affront and challenge that God, who hath said, *Vengeance, is mine,* and *I will repay* it? And yet, such is the madness of every desperate sinner, that he rusheth upon God's neck and upon the thick bosses of his buckler; and daily provokes him, who is infinitely able to destroy both body and soul in hell-fire. Indeed, Jealousy, of itself, without power to wreak vengeance, is but a weak and contemptible passion; but, when it is armed with Almighty strength, it is justly terrible. Now the Lord thy God is אל קנא, a strong and jealous God. Every sin thou committest is a horrid wrong done unto him; and a violation of that faith, which thou owest him. He hath wooed thy affections, sought thy consent; and this thou hast vowed unto him, in thy baptism: and yet thou perfidiously followest other lovers, and givest thy heart unto the world and the Devil, which are God's greatest co-rivals. The highest indignity, that can be done against love, is to contemn and slight it; and to embrace those, who are far more base and sordid: and how notoriously then dost thou affront God, when thou despisest his love and thy own faith, to cast thyself into the embraces of every vile lust, which now pollutes thy soul, and will hereafter damn it! O foolish and unkind, that thou art, to neglect the love of the Great King of Heaven and Earth; and to make choice of the Devil, who is but the slave of God, and solicits thee only to make thee his slave! Yet were it somewhat if thou couldst defend thyself, and maintain thy choice against the jealousy and wrath of the Great God whom thou thus despisest and provokest: but, assure thyself, his wrath and his jealousy will smoke against thee; yea, kindle upon thee, till it hath burnt thee down to the lowest hell; and that day is coming, wherein he will expose thy nakedness and thy shame before men and angels, and upbraid thee with the folly, as well as wickedness of thy choice; and then condemn thee to be an eternal consort with those Devils, whom thou hast preferred before himself. Believe it, it is a sad and fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the Living God; for he is *a jealous God,* and *a consuming fire;* as Moses speaks, Deut. iv. 24.

And, thus much, for the First Observable in this Commination, viz., Who it is that denounceth it: *I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God;* or, *I, the Lord thy God, am strong and jealous.*

ii. The next thing considerable is, WHAT JUDGMENT THIS STRONG AND JEALOUS GOD THREATENS TO INFLICT: and that is, to *visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.*

Visiting is a figurative expression: and, in the general, God is said to visit, when, after a long space of time, in which he seemed to have forgotten, or taken no notice of men, he declares by his providence that he hath still observed their ways and doings.

And this word of Visiting, may be taken, either in a good or in an evil part.

In a good part when God bestows great mercies and salvation upon his people, he is said to visit them: and thus it is frequently used in the Scripture. Exod. iii. 16. Luke i. 68, 78, &c.

In an evil part, God is said to visit, when he rewards those sins, at which he seemed to connive, with deserved punishments. So, Psal. lxxxix. 32; *I will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.* And Jer. v. 9; *Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

And, in this sense, is the word to be taken here: VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN; that is, punishing the fathers' iniquity in their children and posterity. And thus we have it interpreted Jer. xxxii. 18; *Thou recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their Children after them.*

Now here arise two important queries to be resolved:

Whether it be just with God, and consistent with the divine veracity, to punish the sins of the fathers upon the children.

Whether God doth always observe this method of revenging the fathers' crimes upon their posterity and offspring.

1. For the *Former* Query. There seems some difficulty in reconciling Scripture to itself in this particular, and in reconciling such a proceeding to justice and equity.

For, sometimes, the Scriptures do expressly mention the punishment of parents' sins to be inflicted upon their children: Exod. xxxiv. 7. Jer. xxxii. 18, &c. And, when God commands Saul utterly to destroy Amalek, he gives this reason of his injunction: 1 Sam. xv. 2. *I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt.* And yet almost four hundred years were passed, between the journey of the Israelites from Egypt, and the issuing forth of this command: and, therefore, it is not probable, that any of those Amalekites, who opposed them in their way, were then alive to bear the punishment of that offence. Yea, and our Saviour threatens the Jews of his time, Matt. xxiii. 35; *That upon* them should *come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom* they *slew between the temple and*

the altar: That is, the sins of the progenitors, from the beginning of the world unto that very age when they murdered Zachary the father of John the Baptist in the court of the temple, * shall be punished in this generation.

And, yet again, we read as expressly, Ezek. xviii. 20, *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the* iniquity *of the wicked shall be upon him.* And, again, Jer. xxxi. 29, 30, *In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity.*

And, indeed, this seems most agreeable to the rules of justice, that the innocent should not be punished for the sins of the nocent and guilty.

To solve this difficulty and reconcile this seeming contradiction, I shall premise some Distinctions; and then draw from them some Conclusions, satisfactory to the question propounded.

Punishments are either temporal; such as befal in this present life: or else eternal; such as are reserved to be inflicted upon all impenitent and disobedient sinners in the world to come.

Again: children may be considered, either as imitating the crimes and transgressions of their parents; or repenting of them, and reforming from them, and so not walking in their fathers' steps, but in the ways of God's commandments.

(1) Certain it is, that God never visits the iniquity of the fathers upon Repenting and Reformed Children with Eternal Punishments.

And, in this sense, it is everlastingly true, that *the son shall not bear the iniquity of* his *father;* but *the soul, that sinneth, it shall die;* and *every man shall bear his own burthen.*

But some may say, "Are we not made liable even to eternal death, only by the sin of another? Hath not the sin of our first father brought condemnation upon all his posterity? And, therefore, how is it true, that the son shall not, in this respect, bear the iniquity of his father?"

To this I answer: It is not his sin, considered personally as his, that hath made us obnoxious unto eternal death: but it was our sin, as well as his; for, in him, we all sinned and fell. Adam was our federal head and common representative, and his sin was legally ours; even as his obedience would have been, had he persevered in it. But now the case of Adam is singular, and much different from that of intermediate parents. They, indeed are our natural heads;

* Vide. Baron. Annal. An. 1 Sect. 52, &c.

but not our federal heads, as Adam was. Their actions are only their own, and not ours; and have no influence at all upon the determining of our eternal state and condition: and, therefore, we shall not be accountable to God, at the Last Day, for what they have done; but only for what we ourselves have done in the body, whether it be good or evil. Yet,

(2) If the children imitate the wickedness and crimes of their fathers, it is but just and righteous with God, to punish them with eternal death and damnation for them. It is but fit that they should inherit their father's damnation, who inherit their fathers' transgression. But, in this case, it must be observed, that God punisheth them, not because they are their fathers' sins, but because they are their own.

(3) God may, and often doth, visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children with temporal punishments; whether the children imitate the offences of the fathers, or else reform from them.

And these temporal punishments are, many times, very sore and heavy: languishing diseases; racking and tormenting pains; loss of estate sometimes ravished from them by violence, sometimes melting away insensibly. The father, possibly by his unjust oppression and extortion, entails a curse upon his estate; which like a canker, eats it out and consumes it in his son's days: so that nothing is left in his hands but shame and poverty; although, perhaps he might never know the sins, for which God blasts him. Yea, we find that God doth inflict temporal death on the child, for the offence of the parents: thus 2 Sam. xii. 14, in Nathan's message to David, *Because by this deed, thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also, that is born unto thee, shall surely die.*

Thus God doth very frequently inflict temporal punishments upon the children, for the fathers' transgressions.

Nor is it at all hard to reconcile this with the measures of justice and equity, because of that near relation which they bear unto their parents: for, certainly, it is just with God, to punish a sinner in all that is related unto him. Now children are parts of their parents: yea, their parents live and survive in them; and, therefore, certainly, God, in punishing them, may justly strike what part of them he pleaseth. And this even Plutarch, a heathen, could observe: speaking how God did often inflict grievous judgments on the posterity of lewd and wicked men, he tells us: * ουδεν ατοπον αν εκεινων οντες εχωσι τα εκεινων: "It is nothing strange and absurd, for those, who are theirs, to suffer what belongs to them."

* Plutar. de Sero Punitis.

And thus we have briefly vindicated the justice of God, in visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children.

2. But, then, another question is, *Whether God doth always observe this method of revenging the offences of fathers upon their children in temporal punishments.*

To which I answer, no, he doth not. Neither doth this threatening in the Commandment oblige him to do it: but only shows what their sins do deserve; and what he might justly do, if he pleased to use his power and prerogative. And, therefore, we read of the children of wicked parents, who yet were both pious and prosperous: such were Hezekiah, and Josiah; the one the son of Ahaz, the other of Amon. But, most commonly, we may observe it in the course of Divine Providence, that the posterity of wicked parents pay off their fathers' scores to divine justice, in the temporal evils and calamities that are brought upon them. But, yet, if they themselves be pious and holy, this may be for their comfort, that whatsoever afflictions they lie under, shall be for their benefit and advantage; and they are not punishments to them, but only fatherly corrections and chastisements: for the very things, which they suffer, may be intended by God as a punishment to their ancestors, but a fatherly correction to themselves; and what to the one is threatened as a curse, to the other may prove a blessing and an advantage, as it gives them occasion of exercising more grace, and so of receiving the greater glory.

Suffer me to close up this with one or two practical meditations.

First. If it be the usual method of Divine Providence, to visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, see then what great reason parents have to beware that they do not lay up a stock of plagues and curses for their posterity; nor clog the estate which they leave them, with so many debts to be paid to the justice of God, as will certainly undo them.

Thou, who, by fraud and cozenage, heapest together ill-gotten wealth, thinkest perhaps of leaving so many hundreds or thousands to thy children: but considerest not, withal, how many curses thou puttest into the bag; curses, that, in time, will rot and eat out the very bottom of it. Thou, who, by this or by any other way of wickedness, either swearing, or drunkenness, or uncleanness, provokest the Holy and the Jealous God, doth it nothing grieve thee to think, that thy sins shall be punished upon thy poor children's backs? Possibly, thou art so fondly tender of them, that thou art loth to chastise them, when they really deserve it for their own faults: yet art thou so cruel to them, as to abandon them over to

the justice of God; to be severely scourged for faults, which are not their own, but thine. Whose heart would not yearn, and whose bowels would not be turned within him, to go into a hospital, and there view over all those scenes of human misery and wretchedness which are presented to us; the blind, the lame, the deaf, the dumb, the maimed, the distracted, the ulcerated and loathsome leper, and those several maps of man's woes and torments that are there exhibited? Think then with thyself, "This is the inheritance, this is the portion, bequeathed them by their accursed parents:" and, as thou wouldst have thine own children to be made the same sad spectacles of divine wrath and vengeance, so go and sin them into the same condition. Certainly, wolves and tigers are more merciful to their offspring, than wretched man! It is thou thyself, O cruel man! who hast crippled, and maimed, and tormented, and beggared, and undone thine own children: and, perhaps, every sin thou committest, either murders or tortures a poor helpless infant; one, whose greatest misery it is, that ever he was born of thee. I beseech you, Christians, think seriously of this thing: and, as ever you would wish well to those dear pledges which are as your own bowels, so beware how ever you provoke the Holy and Jealous God, by any known and wilful sin; who will be sure to repay it home, either in your own persons by his immediate judgments upon yourselves, or, that which will go as near the heart of every tender and compassionate parent, by his sore judgments on thy poor children and posterity.

Secondly. See here what great reason thou hast to render thanks and praise unto God, that thou art born of holy and pious parents; such as treasure not up wrath for thee, but prayers.

Possibly they were but poor and low in the world: but yet they have bequeathed thee a rich patrimony; and made God Executor, who will faithfully discharge his trust, if thou discharge thy duty; and give thee a blessing possibly in this life, but certainly in the life to come. Let others boast their blood and their parentage; and reckon up a long row of monuments and ancestors: if they have been wicked, lewd, and ungodly, but thine virtuous and the sincere servants of God, they possibly may be the last of their family, and thou the first of thine: howsoever, know that it is far more noble to be born of those that have been born of God, than to be the grandchildren of the Devil. Thou hast better blood running in thy veins, even the blood of them, whom Christ hath judged worthy to be redeemed, and washed with his own blood, whose names are written in heaven in the Lamb's book of life: a greater honour and dignity,

than if they were written in the worm-eaten pages of idle heraldry. And, if thou followest their good examples, thy relations and portion too are greater and richer, for thou hast God for thy father, Christ for thy brother, and the whole heaven of stars for thine inheritance.

And, thus much, for the Second General, what is here threatened in the Commandment: viz., The VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN. I shall be more brief in the two remaining. Therefore,

iii. Let us consider THE PERSONS AGAINST WHOM THIS THREATENING IS DENOUNCED: VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN OF THOSE THAT HATE ME. And who those are, is explained in the antithesis subjoined: KEEPING MERCY FOR THOUSANDS OF THOSE THAT LOVE ME, AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

If then those, that keep God's commandments, are lovers of God, (which our Saviour expressly affirms, John xiv. 21, *He, that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ;*) by direct consequence it follows, that those, who transgress the commandments of God, are haters of God. And what worse can be said of the very Devil himself? Let them pretend never so fair, and speak words full of respect and reverence, yet bring them to this trial, do they observe and keep the commandments of God or no? If not, they are haters of God and goodness.

And, indeed, it is impossible, that those who are disobedient and rebellious, should love God. For can they love him, who hath required from them what they do so extremely loth? Can they love him, whom they must needs apprehend armed with wrath and vengeance, to punish and torment them everlastingly for their sins? Can they love him, who, if they have any consciences in them, they must needs know, hates them with a perfect hatred, and will be avenged on them in their eternal ruin and destruction? Certainly, if we love God because he first loved us, these cannot but hate him, to whom their own consciences must needs attest, that God hates both them and their ways.

iv. Consider THE DURATION AND CONTINUANCE OF THAT VENGEANCE, WHICH GOD WILL TAKE UPON THOSE WHO THUS HATE HIM.

On their own persons, he will revenge himself eternally ; and be ever satisfying his wronged justice, in their insufferable torments: but, on their posterity, he will be avenged unto the third and fourth generation

And yet, even in this very threatening, there is mercy contained. Mercy it is, that such a wicked and accursed race are not cut off,

and cast out of his sight and grace for ever: and that, where once the wrath of God hath seized on any family, it doth not burn down and consume the whole before it; but he graciously stops its course, and gives not way to all his fury. And, in this, mercy glorifies itself against judgment; in that he sheweth mercy unto thousands, but visiteth iniquity only unto the third and fourth generation.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

It is a known rule, that all the Precepts of the Law respect, either those duties which we owe immediately unto God, or those which we owe immediately unto man. The former constitute the First; the latter, the Second Table.

The Commands of the First Table are prescribed us, for the regulating our Divine Worship; which is either internal and more spiritual, or external and more visible.

The Internal Worship of God, with the humblest veneration of our souls, and most sincere affections of our hearts, is required of us in the First Commandment; as I have already declared.

The external Worship of God consists of three parts: Prostration of the Body; Profession of the Mouth; and the Observation of Prefixed Time. And each of these hath a particular command to enjoin them.

The first of these, viz., Prostration of the Body, is required in the Second Commandment: of which I have spoken.

The second, viz,. Profession of the Mouth, comes next to be considered.

And, to guide and regulate this, we have our rule prescribed in the Third Precept of this Table: THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN, etc.

In which words we have: First. A Prohibition: THOU SHALT NOT TAKE. Secondly. A Commination or Threatening: FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTLESS THAT, etc.

In the Prohibition, three things are to be enquired into: What is meant by the NAME OF GOD. What it is to TAKE THE NAME OF GOD. What it is to TAKE GOD'S NAME IN VAIN.

I. What is meant by the NAME of God.

I answer: The Name of God hath sundry acceptations in the Scripture.

i. Sometimes it is taken for THE NATURE AND BEING OF THE DEITY ITSELF.

Nor is it an unusual figure to put *name* for that thing or person, that is expressed by it. As, Rev. iii. 4: *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, that have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white:* that is, thou hast a few persons in Sardis. So, likewise, we may observe it to be frequently used, when the Scripture speaks of God and Christ: Psal. xx.1, *The name of the God of Jacob defend thee:* that is, let the God of Jacob himself, who is the only true and almighty potentate, be thy shield and thy defence. Psal. cxxxv. 3, *Sing praises unto his Name*: that is, offer your returns of thanks and praises unto that God, from whom you have received your mercies and salvation. So, Psal. cxv. 1, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give glory:* that is, let the glory, which is due unto thee, be entirely ascribed unto thyself. And so concerning Christ: Luke xxiv. 47, *Repentance and remission of sins,* are to *be preached* to *all nations in his Name:* that is, through him: and John i. 12, *He gave power to become the sons of God,* to as many as believed in *his Name:* that is, to as many as believed in him. And thus it is used in innumerable places.

ii. Sometimes the Name of God is taken for THE WHOLE SYSTEM OF DIVINE AND HEAVENLY DOCTRINE REVEALED TO US IN THE SCRIPTURES.

Thus the Psalmist, *I will declare thy name unto my brethren:* Psal. xxii. 22. Which the Apostle cites as spoken in the person of Christ; Heb. ii. 12, and the meaning is, That Christ should declare and make known to the world, a true spiritual doctrine and way of worship; and teach them a religion, which should both perfect their reason, and save their souls. And, as a testimony of the accomplishment of this prophecy, our Saviour himself tells us, John xvii. 6, *I have manifested thy Name unto the men, which thou gavest me.* And, v. 26, *I have declared unto them thy Name, and will declare it:* that is, I have instructed them in the true religion, and right worship of the Great God. And so it is taken, likewise, Micah iv. 5, *All people will walk every one in the Name of his God; and we will walk in the Name of the Lord our God, for ever and ever:* that is, we will walk in that way of worship and religion, which is appointed and approved by the Lord our God.

iii. The Name of God is taken for THAT, WHEREBY GOD IS CALLED: AND, BY WHICH, HIS NATURE AND PERFECTIONS ARE MADE KNOWN UNTO THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

For names are imposed to this very intent, that they might de-

clare what the thing is, to which the name doth belong. Thus, when God had created Adam and made him the Lord of this visible world, he caused the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, to pass before him, both to do homage to their new sovereign, and likewise to receive names from him; which, according to the perfection of his knowledge, did then aptly serve to express their several natures, and were not only names, but definitions too. And so, when we read of the Names of God in Scripture, they all signify some expressions of his Infinite Essence, in which he is pleased to spell out himself unto us, sometimes by one perfection, and sometimes by another.

Now these Names of God are either his Titles or his Attributes. Concerning which I have formerly treated at large in expounding to you the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *Hallowed be thy name;* and, therefore, shall here only mention them, and so proceed.

1. His *Titles* are his Name. And they are some of them absolute: and such are those glorious titles of *Jah, Jehovah, God, I am. I am hath sent thee,* saith God to Moses. And these are names altogether incomprehensible and stupendous.

Others are relative; respecting us. So, his name of Creator denotes his infinite power in giving being to all things. Lord and King, signify his dominion and authority in disposing and governing all that he hath made. Father signifies his care and goodness in providing for us his offspring: Redeemer, his mercy in delivering us from temporal evils and calamities, but especially from eternal death and destruction.

These, and other such-like titles, God doth assume unto himself, to express, in some measure, as we are able to bear, what he is in himself.

2. His *Attributes* also are his Name. Some of which are incommunicable: as his eternity, immensity, immutability, simplicity, &c., which are so proper to the Divine Nature that they belong to no created being.

Others are communicable: and so, mercy, and goodness, and holiness, and truth, &c., are the attributes of God. Communicable they are, because some rays of them may be found in the creatures: but, yet, in that infinite degree and excellency, which they have in God; so, they are incommunicable, and proper only to the Deity. And, therefore, though angels or men may be said to be holy, or just, or good; yet none of them are so originally: none are so, infinitely and unchangeably; none are so, simply and in the abstract, but only God himself. These then are the Names of God.

And here is the text, THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN, we must understand it concerning the Name

of God in this last acceptation ; that is, for any name of his, whereby he is pleased to reveal himself unto us; whether it appertain to his titles, or to his attributes: neither of these must be taken in vain.

II. Let us consider what it is to TAKE THE NAME OF GOD.

I answer briefly: To take the Name of God is no other, than to make use of it, either as the object of our thoughts, or the subject of our discourses. And so we find this phrase used, Psal. xvi. 4, *I will not take up their names into my lips.* And, Psal. l. 16, *What hast thou to do.... that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?* that is, that thou shouldst speak, or make mention of it. So that, to take God's Name, is, to speak or mention it.

III. Let us consider what it is to TAKE GOD'S NAME IN VAIN.

To this I answer: God's Name is then taken in vain; When it is used, without propounding to ourselves a due end. When it is used, without due consideration and reverence. When it is used, in an undue and unlawful action.

i. WHEN IT IS USED, WITHOUT PROPOUNDING TO OURSELVES A DUE END. The end specifies the action: if the end be vain, the action must be so too.

Now there are but two ends, that can justify and warrant the use of any of God's Names; either his Titles or his Attributes: and they are,

1. *The Glory of God.* And,

2. *The Edification of ourselves and others.*

Whatsoever is besides these, is light and frivolous; and can be no good ground to us to make any mention of this great and terrible Name: which is so full of glory and majesty, that it should never be uttered, but where the subject of our discourse is serious and weighty.

I will not now speak of those, who vend the holy and reverend Name of God with oaths and blasphemies; a sin, by so much the more heinous and abominable, by how much less temptation there is to it, either of pleasure or profit. This is *an iniquity to be punished by the judges.* And, would to God, laws were put in severe execution, to cramp the black tongues, of all such profane wretches; whose number so abounds and swarms, that we can no where walk the streets, without being assaulted with whole vollies of oaths and curses.

But, for others, who are of more blameless conversation may it not be observed how their discourses and familiar tattle are filled up with the Name of God and Lord? I beseech you, consider: what end do you propound to yourselves, in thus using the great and terrible Name? Are all your discourses so serious, as to bear the

burthen of that great Name? Are they all immediately directed to the advancement of his glory? Or do they all promote the benefit and welfare of those who hear them? If so, then indeed the Name of God can never be more seasonably used. But if you make the Highest Lord serve only to express some small wonderment, or the Great God only an expletive to fill up a gap in your speeches; certainly, these are such low and mean ends, that God will not hold thee guiltless. He accounts himself contemned, when you mention his Name to such idle purposes; and will revenge the dishonour, that you do him by it.

ii. The Name of God is taken in vain, WHEN IT IS USED, WITHOUT DUE CONSIDERATION AND REVERENCE.

Whensoever we make mention of him, we ought seriously to ponder his infinite greatness and glory; and to bow our hearts in the deepest prostration before that Name, to which all the powers in heaven and earth bow down with most humble veneration.

But is it possible, for those, who speak of God promiscuously and at random: is it possible, that they should utter his Name with reverence, when all the rest of the discourse is nothing but froth and levity? Nay, if they be reproved for it, will they not alledge for their excuse that, which is their very sin, That they did not consider it? And, what! will you dare to bolt out the great Name of the great God without considering it? Is that a Name to be sported with, and to be tossed to and fro upon every light and vain tongue? The tongue of man is called his glory: Psal. lvii. 8, *Awake up, my glory.* And shall the glory of man be the dishonour of God? Shall that, which was created to be a principal instrument of magnifying and exalting God's Name, run it over without affection or reverence?

Those things, which we most of all contemn and despise, we use as bye-words; and lay no great stress nor sense upon them. And, truly, when we speak of God, without considering how great, how glorious, and excellent a being he is, how holy, just, and powerful, we do but make him a bye-word; which is the highest contempt and indignity, that can be cast upon him.

And, therefore, the best means, that can be used to secure us from that habit and wicked custom, that many of us have inured ourselves unto, of taking God's Name in vain, is seriously to consider whose Name it is, even the Name of the Great God, who is present with thee, and hears thee pronounce it: that God, to whom the greatest and most glorious things compared, are base and vile nothings: that God, who is jealous of his honour, and will dreadfully revenge himself upon the contemners of it. And, if thou hast but wrought

these considerations into thy heart, and habituated them to thy thoughts, thou wilt for ever be afraid to speak of his majesty vainly and irreverently.

iii. The Name of God is taken in vain, WHEN IT IS USED, TO AN UNDUE AND UNLAWFUL ACTION; especially, when it is brought to confirm a falsehood, either in perjury or heresy: which is a most horrid impiety.

And, therefore, it is observed, that the same word, which is here rendered Vain, (שׁוא) signifies also False or Deceitful. So that this Precept, THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN, may be rendered also, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in falsehood.* Not that this is the only unlawful using of it, but that this is the chief and most notorious abusing of it. And, indeed, what greater sin can there be, than to bring God to be a witness to our lie? To make him, who is Truth itself, attest that, which is falsehood and deceit? And, therefore, Proverbs xxx. 9, Agur prays against pinching poverty, as well as superfluous riches; *Lest,* saith he, *I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain.* That is, lest poverty compel me to steal: and fear of shame or punishment tempt me to swear by the Name of the Great God, that I have not done it. This, indeed, is to take God's Name in vain, in the worst and highest sense.

IV. Suffer me now to close up this with some PRACTICAL APPLICATION of it to your consciences.

i. Let this CONVINCE YOU OF THE GREATNESS AND HEINOUSNESS OF THIS SIN, AND DEEPLY HUMBLE YOU THAT HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF IT.

I well know, that the commonness, whether of God's mercies towards us, or of our sins against him, takes off much from our observation, and abates them both in our estimate. And because that is so common a sin almost in the mouths of all persons, our ears are so beaten to it, that we now little regard it. Possibly, should we hear a devil incarnate belch out some direful oath, we should start and tremble at it: but, when we hear the Name of the Great God, and our only Lord, slip along in some trifling and impertinent discourse, this we take no notice of: and the commonness of the sin hath almost stifled all reproofs.

I beseech you, Christians, consider,

1. That *we are not to weigh sins by the opinion of men, but by the censure and sentence of God.*

He hath no more allowed you to take his Name in vain, than he hath to blaspheme it. The irreverent using of it is as expressly forbidden, as the abjuring and cursing of it. And when the Law of

God hath not dispensed with us, it is most intolerable presumption, that we should dare to dispense with ourselves.

2. Again consider, thou, that sportest away the name of God in thy ordinary prattle, *what wilt thou have to rely upon in thy greatest distresses?*

The Wise Man tells us, Prov. xviii. 10, *The Name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth unto it, and is* saved. But, alas, what comfort canst thou find in the Name of God, in thy greatest necessities; since it is the same Name, that thou hast used and worn out before, in the meanest and most trivial concerns? Thou hast already talked away the strength and virtue of it; and wilt hardly find more support from it in thy tribulation, than thou gavest reverence unto it in thy conversation. Let us then be more cautious, than to spend so excellent a remedy against all fears, and sorrows, and afflictions, vainly and unprofitably. *Thy Name* saith the Spouse, *is* an *ointment poured forth:* Cant. i. 3. But, certainly, if upon every slight occasion, we break the box, and expose the Name of God to common air, it will in time lose its scent and virtue; and, when we have most need of it, we shall find no refreshment, no comfort in it. Besides,

3. This common and irreverent using of the Name of God, *will insensibly over-spread us with a spirit of profaneness.* We shall, by degrees, arrive to a plain contempt of God, whom we thus hourly and unnecessarily take into our mouths.

For, what else is this, but to make ourselves rude and familiar with that Infinite Majesty, towards whom the profoundest testimonies of respect and reverence must fall infinitely short of expressing our due distance? But by using his name vulgarly and promiscuously, what do we else, but make it our sport; and blow it up and down with every idle breath, as children do bubbles in the air?

4. Again, *canst thou, in duty, easily compose thyself to reverence the holy and dreadful Name of God,* when thou hast thus accustomed thyself to name him, without any veneration or respect, in thy common discourses?

Certainly, it is the hardest thing imaginable, to make the heart fall down prostrate before that God, whom thou invokest in prayer, when once thou art used to invoke him slightly in thy ordinary converse.

Let me, therefore, beseech you, O Christians, as you tender his glory, of which he is jealous, that, whensoever you speak of God, or but mention his Name, you would do it with a holy awe and dread of his Divine Majesty; that you would seriously consider, that that Name, to which every knee bows, both of things in hea-

ven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, whether they be angels or devils, requires from you more respect and honour, than to be idly blurted out with every rash and foolish expression.

As you, who are masters of families, and have children and servants committed to your care, beware that you stop this growing sin in them betimes. It is the sin and shame of parents, that they suffer little ones to lisp the Name of God; and to learn the first syllables, and rudiments of oaths and curses before they can well speak: whereby they lay a deep foundation for their future impiety; and thereby bring the guilt of the next generation upon us, who by indulging them in these young sins, do but introduce those habits of wickedness into them, which perhaps, can never afterwards be rooted out.

ii. There is also another kind of taking the name of God in vain: and that is in our DUTIES and HOLY PERFORMANCES.

And this is done two ways:

1. *When, in our prayers, we ask those things of God, which are unlawful or unwarrantable.*

As when we pray, on the behalf of our lusts, to obtain provision to fulfil them: James iv. 3; *Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.* When we pray, out of envy, malice, and revenge, that God would make himself a party in our unreasonable and angry quarrels; such prayers as these are vain: for what we thus desire, either shall not be granted unto us; or, if it be, shall be granted unto us in wrath.

2. *When we perform holy duties slightly and without affection,* we then likewise take the Name of God in vain.

And, therefore, all hypocritical services, all battologies and heartless ingeminations are vain; and God's Name is not sanctified, but abused in them. For, whatsoever we do in such a manner, as we may be certain God will not accept, is done in vain: now God will accept of no performance, which is not accompanied with the heart, and filled with most devout affections; and, therefore, they are performed in vain, and to no other effect, but to increase our guilt and our condemnation. Such invocations are but scoffings of God; and all the motions of our lips, without the correspondent motion of our hearts, is no better than making mouths at God.

iii. There is also another kind of profaning the Name of God, and taking it in vain, which is of a far higher and more heinous nature: and that is, by UNLAWFUL OATHS AND EXECRATIONS.

Now an oath, in the general, is a confirmation of our speeches, by calling in God to witness and attest the truth of them: called, therefore by Tully, a Religious Affirmation. (De Offic. l. iii.)

And it is of two kinds: Assertory, and Promissory. The former, when we assert that such a thing either hath been or is. Or the latter, when we engage that, for the future it shall be, and be performed by us: which oath we do sufficiently and with a good conscience keep, if we use our utmost endeavours to accomplish what we have thus sworn; although the effect may be impeded by many invincible obstacles intervening.

Now because a spirit of error and giddiness hath seized on some persons, who think that every oath is unlawful, and the taking of the holy and reverend Name of God in vain, and so a violation of this Commandment; I shall therefore briefly state that much controverted question, whether, at any time or in any circumstances, it be lawful for a Christian to assume the Name of God in an oath; and then I shall proceed to show you, what oaths are unlawful, and execrable sins.

2. For the *first*, I assert,

(1) That an oath is so far from being always sinful, that it is sometimes a Duty, yea, an Act of Religion, and part of the Service and Worship of God; and, therefore, not only lawful but necessary.

This we find, Deut. vi. 13; *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shall swear by his Name.* Yea, the Psalmist mentions it as a matter of exultation, as if some notable service were done by it unto God: *Every one, that sweareth by him, shall glory:* Psal. lxiii. 11. And if we consult the approved examples of holy men in Scripture, we shall frequently find them, either exacting oaths from others, or else themselves invoking the testimony of the Most High God, to confirm the truth of what they speak. The places are too numerous, to be cited; and too well known to need it.

But, because the great cavil against these, is, that they are only authorities produced out of the Old Testament, and we are now obliged by the precepts of a superior Lawgiver, the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, I say in answer, That the objection argues too great a vilifying and contempt of those Sacred Oracles, which were given to the Church, by the hand of Moses; and that things of a moral nature, as an oath is, cannot in one age of the world be a duty, and in another a sin, when it is attended with the same circumstances.

And, yet further, for their satisfaction, let us see what is spoken concerning oaths in the New Testament, or in the Old relating to it. In the Old, we have a prophecy of what should be hereafter, in the times of the Gospel: Isa. xlv. 23; *I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return,*

That unto me every knee shall bow, and *every tongue shall swear.* And, again, Jer. xii. 16; *And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name.... then shall they be built in the midst of my people.* But, yet, if neither of these will suffice, let us see some more immediate confirmation of this out of the New Testament itself. We find St. Paul himself, more than once, attesting the truth of those grave and weighty matters, which he delivers in his Epistles, by calling God to witness: which is the very form and nature of an oath: so 2 Cor. i. 23; *I call God for a record upon my soul, that, to spare you, I came not as yet unto Corinth:* and, so, again, Phil. i. 8; *God is my record, how greatly I long after you all:* and what other, than a kind of oath, is that vehement asseveration of the same Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 31? *I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus, I die daily.* And, again, Rom. ix. 1; *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not.* And, if you would yet have an example somewhat more perfect, we may see it in the practice of a holy Angel: Rev. x. 5, 6; *The angel* stood *upon the sea, and upon the earth,* and *lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven.... and the earth, and the things in them.... that there should be time no longer.* So that you do abundantly see, by all these instances, that it is not simply and universally unlawful to assume the holy Name of God in an oath; and to call him in, to be a witness to the truth of what we affirm.

The grand objection, that lies against this, is taken from two places of Scripture. The one is that of our Saviour: Matt. v. 34—37; *But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than* this, *cometh of evil.* Can anything be more express against all manner of oaths, than this; where we have a cautious enumeration of many of them, which were most vulgar and common?

The other place is that of St. James: chap. v. 12, *But, above all things, my brethren, swear not: neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.* Can anything be more express, or more commanding than this, *above all things, my brethren?* and, *lest you fall into condemnation?*

But, for answer to this, we must know, that our Saviour and his Apostle do not here simply and absolutely condemn all oaths; but only that common and profuse swearing, which the Scribes and Pharisees taught corruptly to be no sin.

For, in this point of oaths, they had divulged among the people three false traditions.

The one was, That it was lawful for them to swear commonly, and without restraint, by any creature.

The other was, That that was no binding oath, wherein the Name of God was not expressly used: and, therefore, though they should swear by creatures, yet were they not perjured, although they should not perform what they thus uttered, except some few cases, wherein interest made them conscientious. This we have, Matt. xxiii. 16, 18, *Woe unto you, ye blind guides! which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing. And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing.* That is, they taught that such an oath was not obligatory, because it was only by creatures. And yet, even here, they expected such oaths, as were conceived and uttered by the gold of the temple, or the gifts on the altar, out of a politic covetousness; that, by so great a reverence shown to the gifts that were offered, the people might be induced to offer more freely, and by that means their share of them might be the larger.

A third false doctrine that they taught, was, That common swearing was no sin, although it were by the Great God, if what they swear were true. And, by this, they give scope and liberty to confirm all that they said with an oath, if they only took care to utter nothing that was false.

Now only against these three corrupt traditions, are our Saviour's and the Apostle's words directed.

[1] For it is perjury to violate an oath conceived by creatures; and that because of the near relation, that all creatures have unto God, the great Creator. This reason our Saviour mentions in the fore-named place: *Swear not.... by heaven; for it is God's throne; nor by the earth; for it is his footstool:* nor *by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the Great King.* And, more expressly, Matt. xxiii. 21, 22, *He, that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon:* even as he, who *shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.* And so, by the same proportion of reason, whosoever shall swear by any creature, doth also virtually swear by the Almighty Creator of it: and, therefore, it is as much perjury to falsify an oath made by any of the creatures, as though it were made by the Great God himself; because the creatures are all of and from God. And,

[2] Although it be perjury to falsify an oath taken by any creature; yet it is a sin, likewise, and utterly unlawful, to make any such oath, insomuch as it is an idolatrous ascribing a religious wor-

ship unto the creature which is due to God only. And in this sense, especially, I understand these words of our Saviour, *Swear not at all;* i. e. by any creature. And this, the following enumeration of *heaven,* and *earth,* and *Jerusalem,* and their *head,* which were the usual forms of their oaths, and by which our Saviour forbids them to swear, doth clearly prove to be his true meaning.

[3] These places teach, that it is a sin to swear at any time, or by any thing, although the Great God himself, unnecessarily and arbitrarily: and, therefore, swear not at all, unless some just reason and cogent necessity constrain you to call in so great a testimony to confirm the truth of what you speak: for common and quotidian swearing is a high contempt and irreverence shown to the Majesty of that God, whom we bring in to attest to every trifle and frivolous thing we utter.

And this I take to be the true sense and meaning of these places of Scripture: and that they do not simply and absolutely condemn all manner of oaths; but the corrupt doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the corrupt practice of their disciples, who thought it no sin to swear familiarly, if so be that they did not swear falsely. So that the meaning of, *Swear not at all,* is, Swear not unnecessarily and voluntarily.

Now to make an oath lawful, it must have these three qualifications mentioned by the Prophet: Jer. iv. 2, *Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.*

[1] A warrantable oath must be accompanied with Truth.

For it is taken in the Name of the God of Truth: Isa. lxiv. 16. *He, that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth.* And, therefore it behooves him to consider, whether what he deposeth be truth, or not. Yea, moreover, we must be fully certain, that the thing is as we attest it: for a man may be guilty of perjury in swearing that which is true, if he either believe it otherwise, or be doubtful of it.

And, therefore, he that is called to give his oath, must look to these two things: That his words agree with his mind. That the thing agree with his words.

He, who fails in the second, is ψευδορκος, "a false swearer:" he, who fails in the first, is επιορκος, "a foreswearer:" and, in both, is a perjured person.

[2] A lawful oath must be taken in Judgment; discreetly and deliberately; advising and pondering with ourselves before we swear.

And, here, we must consider both the matter; whether that be right and good: and the ends; whether they are duly propounded by us. And there are but two ends, that can warrant an oath: one

is the benefit of ourselves or others: the other, is the glory of God. And whosoever shall swear without a due consideration of these ends, and a holy and sincere desire to accomplish them by his oath, he swears rashly and unwarrantably.

[3] A lawful oath must be taken in Righteousness and Justice. And, therefore, it is very wicked to bind ourselves by an oath or vow, to do things, that are either impossible or sinful.

1st. The matter of a just oath ought to be possible. And, therefore, we see how cautious Abraham's servant was, when his master made him swear, to take a wife for his son Isaac, of his kindred, Gen. xxiv. 5, *Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land.* And so should we, in all our promissory oaths, caution and limit them with those reasonable exceptions, of as far as we know, and can lawfully endeavour.

2dly. The matter of a just oath must be not only possible, but lawful and honest too. For, if it be unlawful, we are necessarily ensnared in sin: for either we must violate God's command, or our own oath. And, therefore, it was a most wicked oath in the Jews, who combined together against Paul; and bound themselves under a curse, that they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed him. And so every oath, which engageth men to sedition, disturbance of government, and rebellion, is in itself an unlawful oath; and obligeth them to nothing, but to repent of it, and renounce it.

According to these three qualifications, must every oath be regulated: else, it is not a lawful oath, but a horrid contempt of God, and taking of his Name in vain.

2. But, to speak no more concerning lawful oaths, let us now consider those, which are too common among us: such, I mean, as are apparently *Unlawful and Sinful.*

Two things make an oath unlawful: falsehood, and rashness.

(1) When it is False. And this, indeed, is a most desperate sin, to vouch a lie upon God's credit; and to father a falsehood upon him, who is the God of Truth, yea, Truth itself. This manifests the highest contempt of God, when we call him to witness that, which the Devil prompted us to speak. Should not we ourselves take it for a high affront and indignity, to be made vouchers of other men's lies, and tales, and properties, to put off their falsehoods? How much more, then, is it a most hellish wickedness, committed against the Great God, to assert a known lie, and then call in God to attest it for a truth! which is no other, but to father a brat of the Devil, who is a liar, and the father of lies, upon God, who hates liars, and hath appointed severe torments for them. See how dreadfully God is

incensed by this sin: Jer. vii. 9, 16, where he speaks of it as almost an unpardonable offence: *Will ye steal,* and *murder .... and swear falsely? Therefore I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out your brethren. Pray not thou for this people; neither lift up a cry nor prayer for them; neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.* And so, Zech. v. 4, speaking of the curse, that should go forth over the face of the whole earth: *I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and* it *shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and* with *the stones thereof.*

(2) As false swearing is a notorious profaning of the Name of God; so, likewise, is Rash swearing, in our common and ordinary discourses.

A sin, that generally abounds and prevails amongst us. Almost every mouth is black with oaths; and we may see the very soot of hell hang about men's lips. Nay, I have observed it, especially in these parts, to be not only the sin of more lewd, and profligate wretches, who mouth their oaths with sound and cadence; but of those, too, who would be thought very severe and strict Christians, who scarce speak a word without a drawl, or a sentence without an oath, and who will pule and whine even in swearing itself. If these men separate to be better instructed, I wish with all my heart their teachers would be pleased so far to condescend from their higher speculations, as to instruct them, that to attest anything by their Faith, or by their truth, is a wicked oath. For all oaths, which are conceived by any other thing besides the Great God, how modest soever they may be in their sound, yet are more impious in effect, than those louder ones, which immediately call God himself to witness; and therefore the Prophet speaks of it as a most heinous and almost unpardonable sin; Jer. v. 7; *How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods.* For, since an oath is a sacred thing and part of divine worship, those, that swear by any created being (as certainly their Faith, and Truth, and Conscience is, if they have any) are guilty not only of vain swearing, but of idolatry too.

3. But some will say, *What so great evil can there be in an oath, so long as it is truth which they assert by it?* This I know is the common reply and excuse of those, who are guilty of this sin, and reproved for it.

To this I answer, (1) Although it may be true, that they speak; yet it is a most provoking sin, so far to debase the holy and reverend

name of God, as to bring it to attest every trivial and impertinent thing they utter; and, if it be by any creature, it is by so much the worse. No oath is in itself simply good, and voluntarily to be used; but only as medicines are, in case of necessity.* But to use it ordinarily and indifferently, without being constrained by any cogent necessity, or called to it by any lawful authority, is such a sin as wears off all reverence and dread of the Great God: and we have very great cause to suspect, that where his name is so much upon the tongue, there his fear is but little in the heart.

(2) Though thou swearest that, which is true; yet customary swearing to truths will insensibly bring thee to swear falsehoods.† For, when once thou art habituated to it, an oath will be more ready to thee than a truth; and so when thou rashly boltest out somewhat that is either doubtful or false, thou wilt seal it up and confirm it with an oath, before thou hast had time to consider what thou hast said or what thou art swearing: for those, who accustom themselves to this vice, lose the observation of it in the frequency; and, if you reprove them for swearing, they will be ready to swear again, that they did not swear. And therefore it is well observed of St. Austin:‡ *Melius nec verum juratur quam jurandi consuetudine, & in perjuriam sæpe caditur, & semper perjurio propinquatur:* "We ought to forbear swearing that, which is truth: for, by the custom of swearing, men oftentimes fall into perjury, and are always in danger of it."

4. Now to *dehort you from this sin of common swearing*, consider:

(1) That it is a sin, which hath very Little or No Temptation to commit it.

The two great baits, by which the Devil allures men to wickedness, are profit and pleasure.

But now this common rash swearing is the most unprofitable, barren sin in the world. What fruits brings it forth, but only the

* *Juro: sed, quantum mihi videtur, magnâ necessitate compulsus: cùm videro non mihi credi, nisi faciam; & ei, qui mihi non credit, non expedire quòd non credit.* Aug. Serm. 28. de verb. Apost.

Μελετη δε αριςη τυ τηρειν περι ὁρκον σεβας, το με πυκνως, μηδε ὡς ετυχε, χρησθαι τω ὁρκω, μηδε επι τοις παρατυχουσι, μηδε εις αναπληρωσιν λογυ, μηδε εις πιςωσιν διηγηματος· αλλ' ὡς οἱον τε, τηρειν αυτο την χρειαν εν τοις αναγκαιοις τη ἁμα και τιμιοις, και τοτε, ὁτε ὐδεμια αλλη των τοιυτων σωτηρια παραφαινεται, ει με δια μονης της εκ τυ ὁρκυ αληθειας. Hierocles in Carm. Pyth. 2.

† Εν τη συνεχεια τυ ομνυειν, ῥαδιως αν μεταπεσοι τις εις επιορκιαν. For which reason, he forbids men to swear commonly, that they may not swear falsely. Ουτω γαρ αν τηρησαιμεν το αει ευορκειν, ει μη καταχρησοιμεθα τοις ὁρκοις. Hierocles in Carm. Pyth. 2.

Προπεπης ὁρκος, προχειρος επιορκια. Phosy. Epist. 1.

‡ Aug. ad Hilareum. Ep. 89. prope finem.

abhorrence and detestation of all serious persons, and the tremendous judgment of God? The swearer gains nothing by it at present, but only the reputation of being a devil incarnate; and, for the future, his gains shall be only the torments of those devils and damned spirits, whose language he hath learnt and speaks. He, that sows the wind of an oath, shall reap the whirlwind of God's fury.

Again: What pleasure is there in it? Which of his senses doth it please and gratify? "Were I an epicure," saith one, * "I would hate swearing." Were men resolved to give themselves up to all manner of sensual delights; yet there is so little that can be strained from this common sin, that certainly unless they intended to do the Devil a pleasure, rather than themselves, they would never set their black mouths against heaven, nor blaspheme the Great God who sits enthroned there.

Ask them why they indulge themselves in such a provoking sin; some cannot forbear out of mere custom; and others are pleased with the lofty sound, and genteel phrase of an oath, and count it a special grace and ornament of speaking. And, what! Are these temptations? Are these such strong and mighty provocations, that you cannot forbear? Shall the Holy Name of the Great God be torn in pieces by you, only to catch and fill up the rents of your idle talk? If this be the motive and inducement that makes you commit so great a sin, as commonly there is no other, know, that you perish as fools perish; and sell your souls to damnation and eternal perdition, for very nothing.

Others, perhaps, will plead for their excuse, that they never use to swear, but when they are vexed and put into a passion. But what a madness is this, when men anger thee, to strike at God, and to provoke him far more than others can provoke thee! If thou art never so highly incensed, why shouldst thou throw thy poisonous foam in God's face? Hast thou no other way of venting thy passion, but to fly in God's face, and to revenge thyself on him, when men have injured thee? Certainly, thy passion can be no more a temptation to do this, than it would be to stab thy father, because thine enemy hath struck thee.

(2) It is a most Foolish sin; because it contradicts the very end, for which they commit it.

The common swearer perhaps thinks, that he shall be much the sooner believed for his oaths: whereas, with all serious and judicious persons, there is nothing, that doth more lighten the credit of his speeches, than his rash binding and confirming the truth of them by swearing. For what reason have I to think that man speaks

* Herbert's Church-Porch.

truth, who doth so far suspect himself, as to think what he relates is not credible, unless he swear to it: and, certainly, he, that owes God no more respect, than to violate the sanctity and reverence of his Name upon every trifling occasion, cannot easily be thought to owe the truth so much respect as not to violate it; especially considering that there are far stronger temptations unto lying, than unto swearing.

(3) Consider that the Devil is the Author and Father, not of Lying only, but of Swearing also.

Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; saith our Saviour: *whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil:* Matt. v. 37; ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἐστι, i. e. it cometh of the Evil One, who is still prompting the swearer, and putting oaths upon the tip of his tongue.

5. I shall now give you some *Rules and Directions;* by the observance of which, you may avoid this too common sin; and so conclude this subject.

(1) Beware of the first Rudiments and Beginnings of Oaths, if thou wouldst not learn them.

And such are a company of idle words, frequently used in the mouths of many, which formerly were bloody oaths, but are now worn to rags, and disguised into imperfect sounds and nonsense. Few, that speak them, know what they mean; but, if they did, certainly they would tremble at such execrable words, that hide and dissemble the most oaths that can be uttered: some of them being blasphemous; as those, that are conceived by the limbs of God: and others being idolatrous; as those, which are conceived by creatures; as in that ordinary by-word of "Marry," which is no less than swearing by the Virgin Mary. And it is a notable artifice of the Devil, to bring such foolish and masqued words into common use: that both they may swear, that use them, although they know it not; and that, by using themselves to unknown oaths, they may be brought, in time, to take up those that are known.

Again: all vehement asseverations have in them somewhat of the nature, and are dangerous beginnings of oaths: and those, who do accustom themselves to them, will, in time, think them not forcible enough to confirm their speeches, and so be brought to attest them by oaths. Make nothing, therefore, the pawn and pledge of a truth; but speak it out simply and nakedly, as it is in itself: and this will sooner conciliate belief, than the most strong and binding asseverations that thou canst invent. This sin of swearing is strangely growing and thriving: for, by a customary using of asseverations, we shall insensibly, upon every occasion, be tripping upon an oath: and a custom of swearing will, at length, bring in perjury: and a

custom of perjury, blasphemy; and make them deny that God, by whom they have so often forsworn themselves, and yet go unpunished. Beware, therefore, that you allow not yourselves any form of asseveration; but *let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay:* proceed no further, for Christ hath allowed you no more.

(2) Subdue, as much as you can, all inordinate Passion and Anger. For anger is, usually the cause and provocation of oaths and blasphemies. Anger is a fire in the heart; and swearing is the smoke of this fire, that breaks forth at the mouth: and those, who are violently hurried with this passion, do usually find nothing so ready at hand as an oath; which, if they cannot be revenged on him whom they conceit to have done them the injury, they fling against heaven itself, and thereby seem to take an impious revenge upon the Almighty God.

(3) Labour to possess thy heart and over-awe it, with the most serious Considerations and Apprehensions of the Greatness and Majesty of God.

This will be a good preservative, to keep thee from abusing and profaning his Name in common and rash swearing. Is he the Great and Terrible God of Heaven and Earth? And shall I put that indignity upon him, to call him from his throne to witness every vanity and trifle that I utter? Would I serve any mortal man so, whom I respect? Or would not he account it an affront and injury done him? How much more, then, will the Great God be provoked; who is so great and glorious, that it tires the conceptions of angels to apprehend his majesty! How much more will he be provoked to have his Name, which he hath commanded to be sacred and reverend, daily rubbed and worn out between those lips, that talk so many light, foolish, and impertinent vanities!

There are several other violations of this Third Commandment: as blasphemy, rash vows, unnecessary lots, &c., which being chiefly to be condemned upon the same account as swearing, and a vain irreverent invoking the Name of God, I shall not treat of them particularly, but leave the sins and guilt of them to be estimated, together with a due consideration of the several circumstances that attend them.

The great Positive Duty required in this Command, is, the reverencing and sanctifying the Name of God, whensoever we make mention of him, or of anything that relates unto him. But because I have, in a former treatise,* spoken concerning that subject, I shall therefore wave it at present, and here put an end to the Exposition of this Third Commandment.

* On the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

We are now arrived, in pursuance of our designed method, to the Fourth and last Commandment of the First Table: and with the Exposition of this, I shall shut up the consideration of those Duties, which do immediately concern the Worship and Service of God.

We have already observed, as a great deal of wisdom and excellency in the matter of each command, so a great deal of heavenly art in the method and digestion of them. And, upon serious reflections on both, we may very well conclude, that they are as well the contrivance of the divine understanding, as the engraving of his finger.

The First requires that, which is first and principally to be regarded, viz., the Inward Veneration of the True God, in the dearest love, and highest esteem, and choicest affections of a pious soul.

The Second enjoins the External Expressions of this reverence, in the prostration of the body, and other acts of visible worship. For, although God chiefly regards the heart, and the frame and disposition of the inward man; yet he neglects not to observe the due composure of the body, as a testimony of the soul's sincerity.

And, as this requires us to honour the majesty of God in our gestures; so the Third requires us to glorify the Holy and Reverend Name of God in all our speeches and discourses: never to make mention of it, but with that prepossession of holy awe and dread, that might compose us into all possible gravity and seriousness.

And, because every thing is beautiful in its season, therefore we have subjoined to all these a particular command, concerning the time wherein God prescribes all these to be more especially tendered unto him. And this is that Precept, which we have now under consideration: REMEMBER THE SABBATH-DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY, etc.

In the words we have a COMMAND, and the ENFORCEMENT of it.

The Command is to sanctify the Sabbath.

And this is justly observable: in that, whereas all the rest are simply either positive or negative, this is both. REMEMBER TO KEEP IT HOLY: and, IN IT THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK. As if God took an especial care to fence us in, on all sides, to the observation of this precept.

The Enforcement also is more particular, and with greater care and instance, than we find in any other command.

For God hath here condescended to use three cogent arguments to press the observation of this law upon us.

The first is taken from his own example, whom, certainly, it is our glory, as well as our duty, to imitate in all things, in which he hath propounded himself to be our pattern: THE LORD RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY, and therefore rest ye also.

The second, from that bountiful and liberal portion of time, that he hath allowed us for the affairs and business of this present life: SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR, AND DO ALL THY WORK; and, therefore, is is but fit and equitable, that the seventh should be given to God, who hath so freely given the rest to thee.

The third, from the dedication of this day to his own immediate worship and service: THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH-DAY, AND HALLOWED IT. So that it is no less a sin than sacrilege, and stealing of that which is holy, to purloin any part of that time, which God hath thus consecrated to himself; and to employ it about either sinful or secular actions.

I. I shall begin with the COMMAND, REMEMBER THE SABBATH-DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY.

The word Sabbath, signifies rest, and cessation from labour: and it is applied unto several things.

First. It signifies the Temporal Sabbath, or the recurring seventh day or year, which we are now treating of. And because this was the most principal day of the week, therefore we find that the whole week is denominated from it, a Sabbath: Luke viii.12.Matt. xxviii. 1.

Secondly. It signifies a Spiritual Rest, a rest from the slavery and drudgery of sin, and those sordid labours which the Devil, our grievous task-master, exacts of us. And of this Spiritual Sabbath, the temporal one is a sign and type. So Exod. xxxi. 13, *My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord, that doth sanctify you.*

Thirdly. It is used likewise, to signify the Eternal Rest of the Blessed in Heaven, where they rest from all their labours, and from all their sorrows, in the full fruition of the Ever-Blessed God, and

of all blessedness in him. So the Apostles: Heb. iv. 9, *There remaineth a rest unto the people of God.* The word is σαββατισμος, there remaineth *a Sabbath,* or *the celebration of a Sabbath,* unto the people of God.

It is only of the first of these, the Temporal Sabbath, that I am now speaking.

And, here, neither shall I speak of the Sabbath of Years, when the land was every seventh year to rest from the labour of tillage and husbandry; as we find it, Lev. xxv. 4, *The seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land:* nor yet of the greater Sabbath of the Jubilee, observed every fiftieth year, at the period of seven sabbatical years, wherein all possessions and inheritances which had been sold or mortgaged, were again to return to the first owners; which Sabbath you have described, Lev. xxv. 8, &c. But I shall only treat of the Sabbath of Days, which this Commandment doth principally respect.

And the general heads upon which I shall proceed, are these Four. Its Primitive Institution. Its Morality and Perpetual Obligation. Its Change from the Last to the First Day of the Week. The Manner how God hath required it to be sanctified by us.

i. Concerning its PRIMITIVE INSTITUTION.

When the Sabbath was instituted, there is some difference between learned men.

Some put a late date upon it: and refer its beginning to the promulgation of the Law; or, at farthest, to the sending of manna to the Israelites. And they ground their assertion upon this: that, before that time, we read not in all the history of the patriarchs, and first ages of the world, of any Sabbath that was observed and sanctified by the holy fathers who then lived; which, doubtless, they would not have neglected, had any such command been given them.

Others, who I believe concur with the truth, fetch its original as high as the creation of the world: grounding their opinion upon that unanswerable testimony, Gen. ii. 2, 3, *On the seventh day God ended his work, which he had made; And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.* Now that there cannot in these words be understood any, prolepsis, or anticipation, declaring that as done then, which was done many ages after: appears plainly, because God is said to sanctify the Sabbath then, when he rested: but he rested precisely on the Seventh Day after the creation; therefore, that very Seventh Day did God sanctify, and made it the beginning of all ensuing Sabbaths. So that you see the Sabbath is but one day younger than man; ordained for him, in the state of his uprightness and innocence, that, his faculties being then holy and excellent, he might

employ them, especially on that day, in the singular and most spiritual worship of God his Creator. And, although we find no more mention of the Sabbath, until Moses had conducted the Children of Israel into the Wilderness, which was about two thousand four hundred and fifty years after the creation; yet it is not to be supposed, that, among the people of God, who were very careful, as in obsering the Law of God themselves, so in delivering it likewise to their posterity, that the observation of this Law or of this Day utterly failed, but was continued among those that feared God, till it was again invigorated with new authority by the promulgation of it from Mount Sinai.

And, thus much, for the Institution.

ii. Concerning the MORALITY of the Sabbath, is a greater controversy, and of far greater moment.

Some loose spirits contend, that it is wholly ceremonial; and so utterly abolished at the coming of Christ: and will not be under the restriction of their liberty, in observing any days or time. Others, again, made it wholly moral; and affirm, that the observation of the very seventh day from the creation, is a Law of Nature, and of perpetual obligation; and, therefore, think themselves bound to keep the Jewish Sabbath.

That I may clearly state this obscure and difficult question, I shall only premise,* That those things are said to be Moral and of the Law of Nature, which are in themselves rational and fit to be done, although there were no express command to enjoin them. So that, where there is a great equity in the thing itself, enough to sway a rational and honest man to the doing of it, that is to be accounted Moral, and authorized by the Law of Nature. That is of Positive Right, which is observed, only because it is commanded; and hath no intrinsical goodness or reason in itself, to commend it to our practice, but obligeth us only upon the injunction and authority of another. As, for instance: It is naturally good to obey our parents, to abstain from murder, theft, adultery, &c., to do to others as we would be content to be dealt with: these things we are obliged unto by the very light of reason and the principles of nature, although there had been no written Law of God to impose them. But then there were other things, to which God obliged some of his people, that had nothing to commend them besides the authority of his command: and such were the various ceremonies under the

* *Ratio profecta à rerum naturâ, & ad rectè faciendum impellens, & à delicto avocans, non hinc demique incipit lex esse cùm scripta est, sed tum cùm orta. Orta autem simul est cum mente divinâ.* Cic. de Legib. lib. ii.

Law; yea, and in innocence itself, that prohibition given to Adam not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The former sort are moral and natural commands; the latter, positive and instituted. The former are commanded, because good: the latter are good, because commanded.

1. *Certain it is, that a convenient portion of our time is due unto the service and worship of God by natural and moral right.* For, certainly, it is but fit and just, that he should have a large share of our life and time, who hath given us life and time here upon earth, and hath created us to this very end, that we might serve and glorify him. Yea, had it been propounded to ourselves how much we would have allowed for God, could we, without shame and blushing, have set apart less time for his service from whom we have all, than himself hath done? This I think is by all agreed to.

2. *The Law of Nature doth not dictate to us any particular stated days to be set apart for the Worship of God, one more than another.* For, indeed, there can be no natural reason, why this day more than that; why every seventh day, rather than every sixth, or fifth, or fourth: for all days being in their own nature alike, reason can find no advantage to prefer one of them before another. But that, which is obligatory by the Law of Nature, ought to be plain and evident to all men; or, else, evidently deducible from some natural principles. Now if we lay aside the positive command of God, there is no one day in itself better than other: and, therefore, there is a *memento* prefixed to the Command, (REMEMBER, THAT THOU KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH-DAY) which is not added to any other precept; intimating to us, that the observation of a special day is not a dictate of nature, but only an imposition of God, which he requires us to remember and bear in mind.

3. *That the Seventh Day should be especially consecrated to the service and worship of God, is from his positive will and command:* and therefore is as binding and forcible, as if it were a Law of Nature engraven on our hearts; unless the same authority alter it, that did first enjoin it. For this, being a positive law, is therefore good and necessary, because commanded. And if it had not been revealed to us, we should never have been obliged to this observation; nor made obnoxious to punishment, for failing in it. Yet, again,

4. *This declaration of the will of God concerning the sanctification of the Sabbath, is attended with a moral reason:* and, therefore, is not merely and barely positive; as Ceremonial Laws are. Which reason is that God rested on the Seventh Day; and, therefore, we ought so to do. Now, although this reason carries not such a natural evi-

dence in it, as to have obliged us, unless it had been revealed: yet, being revealed, we may discern a certain aptitude and fitness in it to oblige us to the observation of the Seventh Day, rather than any other; since piety and religion require, that we should imitate God, in those things, wherein he would have us to imitate him. So that I account this Command to be Moral-Positive: moral, in that it requires a due portion of our time to be dedicated to the service and worship of God: positive, in that it prescribes the Seventh Day for that especial service, which the Light and Law of Nature did not prefix: and mixed of both, in that it gives a reason of this prescription, which hath somewhat of natural equity in it; but yet such, as could not have been discovered without special and divine revelation.

Now, because the observation of a Sabbath hath thus much of morality and of the Law of Nature in it, it is most certain that we are bound to keep a Sabbath, as much as the Jews were; although not to the circumstance of the duty. For,

(1) This Command was obligatory, even in Paradise itself, in the State of Innocency; and, therefore, contains nothing in it unworthy the state of a Christian. It is no ceremonial command; nor to be reckoned amongst those things, which were typical, and prefigured Christ to come in the flesh: and, therefore, neither was it abolished at his coming; but still there lies a strict and indispensable obligation upon us, to observe a Sabbath holy unto the Lord.

(2) The Reasons of this Command are all of them Moral and Perpetual; and, therefore, such is the obligation of it, to us Christians. The equity is the same to us, that it was to them: viz., that we should allow one day in seven to the worship of that God, who so liberally allows us six for our ordinary affairs: the ease and refreshment of our bodies from the labours of our callings, is as necessary as then it was; and we are still as much obliged, with thankfulness to remember and meditate upon the great mercy of our creation, as they were. And, therefore, if these we sufficient reasons, why the Jews should observe a particular Sabbath, they are still as forcible and cogent with us. Again,

(3) Our Saviour, fortelling the destruction of Jerusalem, bids his disciples *pray, that* their *flight* might *not be in the winter*, nor *on the Sabbath-Day:* Matt. xxiv. 20. And yet the destruction of that city happened about forty years after the death of Christ: and therefore, certainly, those, who were his disciples, lay under an obligation of observing a Sabbath-Day; because our Saviour intimates, that it would prove a heavy addition to their affliction, if they should be

forced to take their flight on the Sabbath, when they ought and desired to be employed in the spiritual exercise of devotion and holy duties proper to that day.

But, although the sanctifying of a Sabbath be thus obligatory to Christians; yet it is not the same Sabbath-Day, to the observation of which the Jews and the people of God, before Christ's coming into the world, were bound. But it is, with good ground and upon good authority, changed from the last to the first day of the week; from Saturday to Sunday; called now the Lord's Day, because it was that day of the week on which our Lord and Saviour rose from the dead: in memory of which, and in a thankful acknowledgment of the great mercy of our redemption, fully completed by his resurrection, the Sabbath has been translated to this day; and is now rightly celebrated on this day, by all the Churches of Christ throughout the world.

iii. And this CHANGE of the Sabbath is the third head which I promised to speak of.

Now, as the first institution of the Sabbath was by divine authority; so likewise is the change of it. For, as God rested from all his labour on the last day of the week: so Christ rested from his labour, sorrows, and afflictions on this day; in which he fully completed the work of our redemption, and manifested it to be perfected by his resurrection from the dead. Therefore, as the Jewish Sabbath was sanctified, because of the finishing of the Work of Creation: so was the Christian Sabbath, because of the finishing of the Work of Redemption; which is of far greater importance, and therefore deserves more to be celebrated than the other. Christ sanctified this day by his resurrection; and the Apostles confirmed the observation of it, both by their writings and uniform practice: and it hath such an inviolable stamp of divinity upon it, that now it is no more alterable to the end of the world.

Nor is it needful, that an express command of Christ should be brought for this change out of the New Testament. It is sufficient, if, by necessary consequence, it may be deduced from Scripture. And, yet,

1. *We have express places of the Scripture thus far, that the First Day of the Week is mentioned as the stated time for Christians to meet together, to preach, to hear, and to break bread in the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, and to perform other duties of religion.*

So, Acts xx. 7, *Upon the First Day of the Week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.* Which plainly declares, that the solemn meetings and assemblies of Christians were

then on this day: the Jewish Sabbath beginning to wear out; and the Christian Sabbath, or the Lord's Day, coming into its place and stead. Again:

The public collections, for the poorer saints, were ordained by the Apostle to be made on this day. *Now concerning the collection for the saints.... Upon the First Day of the Week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him:* 1 Cor. xvi. 1. 2. And this very rule and custom, the Apostle saith he had before established in the Church of the Galatians. And why should this day be chosen for their collections, but only because the assemblies of Christians were held on this day; and so gave a better conveniency to gather their charity, than at any other time? Again:

St. John saith of himself, that he *was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day*: Rev. i. 10, which is no other but this our Christian Sabbath, that hath received this title and denomination from our Lord Christ. For what some say, that the Lord's Day means no more than the day of the Lord's appearing to him, and revealing those many mysterious visions, is vain and dilate, and scarce agreeable to the sense and gravity of Scripture expression. It signifies, therefore, this day: wherein the Apostle being, in all likelihood, taken up with spiritual meditations God was pleased to gratify him with the revelation of those great things, which were afterwards to take their effect and accomplishment.

Put the force of these Scriptures together, and they will certainly amount to the full proof of the institution of this First Day Sabbath. It is called the Lord's Day: it was appointed and used for the assemblies of the saints; for the preaching and hearing of the Word, and administration of the Sacrament; for the collection of alms for the relief of the poor; and this not in one church only, but in other churches of the saints; and that likewise not at some more solemn times only, but weekly. Put these together, and what more plain and evident proof can a thing of this nature admit of?

2. A second argument, to prove this change, shall be that, which with all sober men may be sufficiently valid; which is *the constant and uninterrupted practice of the Church in all ages, from the time of man's redemption by the death and resurrection of Christ, to this very present day.*

Christ himself began the sanctification of it by his resurrection: on the same day he appeared to his disciples: and he himself informs them of his resurrection; John xx. 19.

I have already declared unto you the practice of the Apostles: and, for the practice of the Primitive Church immediately after the

Apostles, all ecclesiastical histories do, with one consent, testify that the solemn assemblies of Christians were held on this day: which unvaried custom and observation of the Church of Christ ought to be of great weight with all solid and serious Christians. And if we add to this, likewise, the unanimous consent of the most holy and spiritual men, who are generally found to be the most strict observers of the Lord's Day; and, lastly, the great blessing, that God hath poured out upon his people in the plentiful effusion of his Grace and Spirit on them in his holy ordinances celebrated on this day; it will be past all question and debate, that *this is the day that the Lord hath made* for himself, and therefore *let us be glad and rejoice therein.*

We have thus considered the Institution, Morality, and Change of the Sabbath. All which are the more abstruse and intricate, partly, from the silence of the Scriptures, which leave us to collect the truth by inferences and deductions: and, partly, from the different opinions of learned men; whose queries and disputes about these points are so various and endless, that, as Maldonate said of Luke ii. 34: "The place had been much easier understood, if no man had attempted to expound it," so I may say of the questions in hand, It had been much easier to determine them, if no man had debated them. I have endeavoured to make them as plain and perspicuous, as the nature of the subject would permit; laying aside all contentious arguments and needless cavils, both of one side and the other.

iv. The fourth general propounded, remains now to be considered which as it is of greater concernment than the rest, so it is of equal difficulty: and that is, concerning THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SABBATH.

In treating of which, I shall observe the same method: and satisfy myself in laying down positively what Scripture and Reason dictate, without engaging in those tedious disputes about it, which might make this discourse both unpleasing and unprofitable.

This Commandment, therefore, speaks of a Twofold Sanctification of this day: the one, which it hath already received from God; the other, which it ought to receive from man: and the former is given as a reason of and motive unto the latter.

1. *God hath sanctified the Sabbath-Day.*

So we have it, ver. 11; THE LORD BLESSED THE SEVENTH-DAY, AND HALLOWED IT. Where these two words *blessed* and *hallowed*, are only exegetical one of the other; and carry in them the same sense, common to both.

Now God blessed and hallowed the Sabbath-Day, not by infusing any inherent quality of holiness into it: for neither days, nor places, nor any inanimate things are subjects capable of real holiness:

(1) But God blessed and hallowed it, by Separating that day from others: bestowing a higher Dignity and Privilege upon it, as the day; whereon both himself chose to rest from the works of creation; and the day, whereon he requires that we also should rest from the works of our ordinary vocations.

For, to hallow and sanctify, is to set any thing apart from profane and common, unto sacred and spiritual uses. God, therefore, sanctified the Sabbath, when he selected it out of the course of other days, and set it apart from the common employments and services of life; ordaining, that the spiritual concernments of his glory and our salvation should be therein especially transacted. And this is that blessing, which God hath conferred upon this day: for what other benefit is a day capable of, but only, that, when the other six days, like the unregarded vulgar of the year, were to be employed in the low and sordid drudgery of earthly affairs; this Seventh Day God hath raised from the dunghill, and set upon the throne, appointing it, according to Ignatius's phrase,* *την βασιλιδα, την ὑπατον των ἡμερων*: "The prince and sovereign of days:" exempting it from all servile works; and designing it for such spiritual and celestial employments, that, were it observed according to God's command, eternity itself would not have much advantage above it, but only that it is longer. So that, in the ring and circle of the week, the Sabbath is the jewel, the most excellent and precious of days.

(2) God hath blessed and sanctified it, not only in this relative, but also in an Effective Sense: viz., as he hath appointed it to be the day, whereon he doth especially bless and sanctify us.

Yea, and possibly he makes the means of our sanctification to be more effectual on this day, than when they are dispensed on any other, common days. God doth then especially give out plentiful effusions of his Spirit, fills his ordinances with his grace and presence: and we may, with a more confident faith, expect a greater portion of spiritual blessings from him, when both the ordinances and the day too are his; than when, though the ordinances be his, yet the day is ours. In this sense, God may be said to bless and sanctify the Sabbath-Day, because he blesseth and sanctifieth us on that day. As the Psalmist, most elegantly and in a high strain of poetry, saith, that God crowneth *the year with* his *goodness:* Ps. lxv. 11; not that the plenty and fruitfulness of the year is any blessing

* Epist. ad Magnesios.

unto it; but it is a blessing unto men, whose hearts God then filleth with food and gladness.

In both these senses, may God be said to bless and sanctify the Sabbath.

2. As God sanctified the Sabbath, so *Man is commanded to sanctify it also:* verse 8; REMEMBER THE SABBATH-DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.

Now we sanctify and hallow a day, when we observe it holy to the Lord; sequestering ourselves from common affairs, to those spiritual exercises, which he hath required us to be conversant about on that day. God sanctifies it, by consecration: we sanctify it, by devotion. He hath set it apart for his worship: and, on it, we ought to set ourselves apart for his worship; and to be taken up only with those things, which he hath either allowed or prescribed us. And, therefore, God doth lay an especial claim to this day. For, although he be the Supreme Lord of all; and doth dispense, and as it were draw out the thread of time, and days, and years for us, out of the infinite bottom of his eternity: yet he doth not so particularly challenge any part of it to himself, as he doth this Seventh Day. Whence it is said, ver 10; THE SEVENTH-DAY IS THE SABBATH OF THE LORD THY GOD. The six foregoing days of the week are thine; and thou mayest dispose of them in the honest works of thy calling, as prudence and convenience shall direct: but this day God challengeth to himself, as his peculiar portion of our time, because he hath ordained it for his worship and service; and, therefore, it is called his. And, when we devote ourselves to his service and worship, meditating on his excellency, magnifying and praising his mercy, and invoking his Holy Name, we then hallow this day, and give unto God that which is God's.

And thus you see what it is to sanctify the Sabbath: both as God hath done it, by dedicating; and as man ought to do it, by observation.

But the great difficulty is, in what manner the Sabbath ought to be sanctified and kept holy: whether or no we are bound to the same strict and vigorous observation of our Christian Sabbath, as the Jews were of theirs, under the economy of Moses.

To this I answer, in the general: That, as our Sabbath is not the very same with theirs, but only the same analogically, bearing a fit proportion to it: so, likewise, our sanctification of the Lord's Day (for thus I would rather call it, than the Sabbath) is not, in all particulars, the same that was required from the Jews; but bears a proportion to it in those things, which are not ceremonial, nor burdensome to our Christian Liberty.

But, more particularly: The sanctifying of this day consists, partly, in abstaining from those things, whereby it would be profaned; and, partly, in the performance of those things, which are required of us, and tend to promote the sanctity and holiness of it.

(1) Here, first, I shall lay down this: That, in order to our due sanctifying of the Sabbath, we ought to abstain from the common and servile Works of our ordinary Callings and Vocations.

So we have it expressly, ver. 10, IN IT THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK. And this God prohibits, not that rest and cessation is in itself acceptable unto him, or any part of his worship and service: but only because earthly employments are an impediment and distraction to that heavenly frame of spirit, which we ought to maintain in all the parts and duties of this day. The works of our callings are not evil in themselves, but lawful and good; and such, wherein on other days we serve God, and whereon we may expect a blessing from him: but yet our mind is so narrow and stinted, that we cannot, at once, attend them and the service of God, with that zeal and fervour, that he requires; and, therefore, that we may be wholly employed in his work, he hath taken us off from our own.

This prohibition of working on the Sabbath is strongly enforced, by the concession of six days for our ordinary labour: a concession, I call it, considering the indulgence granted unto us. But yet it is not merely a concession, but a command too: SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR, AND DO ALL THY WORK; BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH OF THE LORD. That exceptive particle, *but*, intimates unto us, that none of that work, which is lawful to be done on ordinary days, ought to be performed by us on the Sabbath.

I know it is a question, whether these words, SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR, be a precept, or a permission only. To me, they seem preceptive; requiring us diligently to attend that vocation and state of life, in which the Divine Providence hath set us; and to perform the offices of it, with care and conscience: for it is said, *thou shalt labour*, not only *thou mayest labour*. And those, who contend that they merely signify a permission of the daily works of our callings, open too wide a gap for sloth and idleness to creep in, without violating any commandment, or being censured and condemned for sin.

But I shall not trouble you with the disputes about this. Only let me take notice of the weakness and inconsequence of one inference, that is commonly drawn from it: and this is, If it be a divine precept, that we ought six days to labour, then can we not by any constitution whatsoever be taken off from the lawful works of our callings, nor obliged to keep any other days holy and solemn be-

sides the Sabbath: for God's laws do not contradict themselves; and whereinsoever human laws contradict the divine, they are of no force nor validity.

But this argument fails in its deduction. For the command, SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR, is not to be understood absolutely and unlimitedly, but with a just restraint and exception: that is, Thou shalt labour six days ordinarily; unless any of them be set apart, either by thine own private devotion or by public authority, for the immediate worship and service of God.

And that this is of necessity to be so understood, appears, if we consider how many days in the week God himself did dedicate, in those Feasts, which he commanded the Jews strictly to observe, notwithstanding that they were enjoined six days' labour. Besides every New Moon; the Passover, in remembrance of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, and as a clear type of Christ, who, as a lamb without spot, was offered up to God for us. Then Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, fifty days after the Passover; a memorial, that the Law was given to them from Mount Sinai fifty days after their departure out of Egypt; typifying, likewise, the sending of the Holy Ghost to inspire the Apostles with heavenly truth, and to enable them to preach the Gospel, which is the Law of Jesus Christ, which was accordingly fulfilled fifty days after Christ, our great Passover, was sacrificed for us. Then, thirdly, the Feast of Atonement or Expiation, which was celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month whereon the high-priest was solemnly to confess unto God both his own sins and the sins of the people, and to make atonement for them; typifying thereby the full expiation and atonement of our sins, made by our High-Priest, Jesus Christ. And, lastly, there was ordained likewise the Feast of Tabernacles, on the fifteenth day of the same month: and this was to last, not only one day, but a whole week together; and was instituted to be a memorial to them of their journey through the wilderness, wherein for forty years, they lived in tents and tabernacles. All these feasts we find appointed by God himself, and imposed upon the Israelites, Lev xxiii.

And, not only did they account themselves obliged to keep these days holy, which were enjoined by the divine command; but those also, which were appointed by human authority. And such were the Feast of Purim, to be kept two days following; in remembrance of their deliverance from the malicious and bloody designs of Haman, Esther ix. 21. And the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple; first observed at the rebuilding of their temple after their return from the Babylonish Captivity; as you may read, Ezra vi. 16:

and from that time perpetuated unto the days of our Saviour Christ: who, though it were but of human and ecclesiastical institution, yet was pleased to honour that solemnity with his presence: John x. 22. Besides, we frequently read of Fasts, both personal and national, appointed upon some emergent occasions, to appease and divert the wrath of God: as the Fast of the Fifth and the Seventh Month, for seventy years together: Zech. vii. 5. And the like to these, without doubt, either our own private devotion, or the public authority of the nation, may, in the like circumstances, impose on us, without violating this command of six days' labour.

But, although this Six Days' Labour was not so strictly required, as not sometimes to admit the intervention of a holy rest; yet the Seventh Day's Rest was so exactly to be observed, as not to admit any bodily labour or secular employment. God would not have this holy rest disturbed by the tumultuous affairs and businesses of life: and we find this command strictly enforced, by the double sanction both of a promise and threatening, Jer. xvii., from verse 24 to the end: *If ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath Day, but hallow the Sabbath Day, to do no work therein; Then shall there enter into the gates of this city, kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David.... and this city shall remain for ever....But, if you will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath Day.... then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.* Yea, God was so accurate about this, that he descends to a particular prohibition of several sorts of works, which he would not have to be done on the Sabbath-Day. On that day, the Israelites were not to gather manna: Exod. xvi, 26; nor to gather in their harvest: Exod. xxxiv. 21; nor to buy or sell: Neh. x. 31; nor to tread the wine-press: Neh. xiii. 15; nor so much as to gather sticks: Numb. xv. 32; nor to go from their places of abode, to provide themselves food: Exod. xvi. 29; yea, so strictly were they tied to the observation of this Sabbath, that they might not so much as kindle a fire: Exod. xxxv. 3; *Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the Sabbath-Day.* Unto all which prohibitions from God, the Jews added many superstitious and ridiculous ones of their own, not grave enough to be here mentioned; whereby they made that burthen, which was before heavy, to be altogether insupportable by their foolish and vain traditions.

Now the great question is, How far these prohibitions do concern us, and whether we are obliged to the punctual observance of them as the Jews were.

To this I answer, in the negative, that we are not: for we are bound to nothing by the Law of Moses, but only what was of moral and natural right in that law; and as for other ordinances, which were positive, we are set free from them, by that liberty, which Jesus Christ hath purchased for and conferred upon his Church. We do not celebrate the Lord's Day itself, upon any obligation laid upon us by the letter of this Fourth Commandment; for that expressly enjoins the Seventh Day from the Creation, whereas ours is the Eighth: but only from the analogy and proportion of moral reason; which requires, that a due and convenient portion of our time should be separated to the service and worship of God. But, for the fixing of the very day, why it should be this rather than any other, we acknowledge it to proceed from the consecration of it by our Saviour's Resurrection, the Institution of the Apostles, and the consequent Practice of the Universal Church of Christ in all ages, as I have already declared. And, therefore, should we as scrupulously and nicely observe it in all circumstances, as the Jews did their Sabbath; possibly, it would not be a sanctification of the Sabbath, but a fond and groundless superstition.

The Lord's Day is, therefore, to be observed, as only in things that are in themselves moral and rational. Nor will this give any scope to the libertinism of those, who would willingly indulge themselves, either in worldly affairs or loose recreations, on this day. For it is moral and rational, that the whole of that day, which is set apart for the worship of God, should be employed in his worship. This likewise is moral, and of spiritual obligation, that we do not our *own pleasure*, nor speak our *own words* on his holy day; as the Prophet expresseth it, Isaiah lviii. 13.

This obligeth us Christians, as well as the Jews. For if a day be dedicated unto God, certainly every part and parcel of it belongs unto him; and we ought to rest from all our worldly employments, that might steal away our thoughts and affections from God, or indispose us to his spiritual worship and service.

But, yet, this extends not to those small punctualities of gathering sticks, kindling a fire, and preparing food for ourselves: for these things doubtless, may be done, without being any moral impediments to our piety and devotion on this day. Yea, they may be moral helps and furtherances unto it.

For, notwithstanding this rest and cessation from labour, that is required from us on the Lord's Day, yet there are three sorts of works, that may and ought to be performed on it, how great soever our bodily labour may be in doing them.

And they are, Works of Piety: Works of Necessity: and Works of Charity.

[1] Works of Piety are to be performed on the Lord's Day: yea, on this day especially, as being the proper works of the day.

And such are not only those, which consist in the internal operations of the soul; as heavenly meditations, and spiritual affections: but such also, as consist in the external actions of the body; as oral prayer, reading of the Scriptures, and preaching of the word. Yea, on this day are ministers chiefly employed in their bodily labour, and spending of their spirits: yet it is far from being a profanation of the Lord's Day; for holy works are most proper for holy days. And not only are such works to be performed on the Lord's Day, but they were enjoined also on the Jewish Sabbath. And therefore saith our Saviour, Matt. xii. 5, *Have ye not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbath Days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and* yet be *blameless?* This word, therefore, of profaning the Sabbath, is not to be understood of a formal profanation; as if they did that, which was unlawful to be done on that day; but only of a material profanation; that is, they laboured hard in killing and flaying, and dividing and boiling, and burning the sacrifices in the temple: which, had they not been instituted parts of God's worship, had been profanations of the Sabbath; but, being commanded by God, were so far from being profanations, that they were sanctifications of that day. And, upon this account, likewise, were Sabbath Days' Journies permitted to the Jews: which though they were not actions of piety in themselves, yet were they actions tending towards piety; that those, who were remote from the places of worship, might assemble themselves together to hear the Scriptures read and expounded to them. This appears, 2 Kings iv. 23; where the husband of the Shunamitish Woman expostulates with her: *Wherefore wilt thou go to* the prophet *to-day! It is neither new moon nor sabbath.* Whence it may be clearly collected, that they were permitted to travel a certain space, to attend upon the worship and service of God. And this Sabbath Day's Journey some limit to a mile; others two, the distance of the utmost part of the Camp of Israel from the Tabernacle of the Congregation. But, with very good reason, it may be thought that the Sabbath Day's Journey, was any distance from the place of their abode to the next synagogue; which, commonly, not being above a mile or two, that distance was vulgarly called a Sabbath-Day's Journey.

So that it appears, that works of Piety, or Works immediately tending to Piety, may lawfully be performed with the strictest observation of the Lord's Day.

[2] Not only works of piety, but Works of Necessity, and of great convenience, may also be done on the Lord's Day.

And they are such, without which we cannot subsist, or not well subsist: and therefore, we may quench a raging fire; prevent any great and notable damage, that would happen either to our persons or estates; fight for our own defence, or the defence of our country; without being guilty of the violation of this day: concerning the last of which, histories inform us, that the Jews were so scrupulous, as to suffer themselves to be assaulted and slain by their enemies, rather than they would on this day lift up a weapon to repel them, till Matthias persuaded them out of this foppish superstition; 1 Maccab. ii. 40. And not only those works, which are of absolute necessity; but those likewise, which are of great conveniency, may lawfully be done on the Lord's Day: such as are kindling of fire, preparing of meat, and many other particulars too numerous to be mentioned. We find our Saviour defending his Disciples against the exceptions of the Pharisees, for plucking the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them on the Sabbath Day: Matt xii. 1, &c. Only let us take this caution, that we neglect not the doing of those things till the Lord's Day, which might be well done before; and then plead necessity or convenience for it: for if the necessity or convenience were such as might have been foreseen, our Christian prudence and piety ought to have provided for it before this holy day; so that we might wholly attend the immediate service of God in it, with as few avocations and impediments as are possible.

[3] Another sort of works, that may and ought to be done on the Lord's Day, are the Works of Charity and Mercy.

For, indeed, this day is instituted for a memorial of God's great mercy towards us; and, therefore, in it we are obliged to show charity and mercy: charity towards men, and mercy to the very beasts themselves. And, therefore, although the observation of the Sabbath was so strictly enjoined the Jews, yet was it to give place to the works of mercy, whensoever a poor beast did but stand in need of it. So Matt. xii. 11, *What man shal there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath Day, will not lay hold on it, and lift it out?* And so, again, Luke xiii. 15; *Doth not each one of you, on the Sabbath, loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?* Yea, and this the very heathens observed on their festivals: when other works were forbidden, yet, works of mercy were expressly allowed; and, by name, the helping of an ox out of a pit.* Works of mercy, therefore, are to be

* Macrob. Saturn. lib. i. cap. 16.

done even to beasts themselves, whatsoever labour may be required to the doing of them: and how much more, then, works of charity, to men like ourselves! which charity is to be shown, either to their souls, or their bodies; for both, many times, are extremely miserable.

To their Souls, in instructing, advising, exhorting, reproving, comforting and counselling of them, praying for them; and, if, in anything they have offended us, freely forgiving them; this, indeed is a work of charity proper for the Lord's Day; a work, highly acceptable unto God, and the best way that can be to sanctify it. Neither are we to forbear any work of charity to their Bodies and outward man: and, therefore, we find how severely our Saviour rebukes the superstitious hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who murmured against him as a Sabbath-Breaker, because he had healed some of their infirmities on the Sabbath Day: Luke xiii. 14, 15, 16, *The ruler of the synagogue said unto the people, with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath Day, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath Day.* See how our Lord takes him up: *Thou hypocrite! doth not each one of you, on the Sabbath, loose his ox? &c. And ought not this woman,* who is *a daughter of Abraham* .... to *be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath Day?* And so, again, Matt. xii. 10: Christ healeth *a man, that hath a withered hand;* and justifieth this work of charity to this man, by their works of mercy to their beasts; and asserts, ver. 12, *It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath Days.* Yea, he appeals to their very consciences in this, whether a benefit done to a poor helpless creature could be counted a breach and violation of the Sabbath: Mark iii. 4, *Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath Days, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?* Certainly, it is a right Sabbath Day's Work, to do good; and to put ourselves to any work and labour, that may tend to the saving of life, or easing of pain, or healing of the diseases and sickness of our brother. And our Saviour hath told us, Mark ii. 27, *That the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.* The strict and punctual observation of the Sabbath is to give place, whensoever the exigence or good of our neighbour doth require it; for God prefers mercy before sacrifice.

Thus you see what rest is required from us, on the Lord's Day; and what works may be done on it, without any violation of the law, or profanation of the day.

And this is the first thing, in order to our sanctifying the Sabbath, viz., That we ought to rest from the common and servile works of our ordinary callings and vocations.

(2) The sanctification of the Sabbath doth especially consist in a diligent and conscientious attendance upon all the Ordinances of God and the Duties of his Worship, appointed to be performed on this day: and that, whether in Public, or in Private, or in Secret.

[1] Consider what duties you are to be engaged in, in the Public, and Solemn Worship of God on this day: for, in them, a great and principal part of the sanctification of it doth consist.

This I mention in the first place, as most preferable. For, certainly, as long as, through the mercy of God, we have the public and free dispensation of the Gospel, we ought not to slight nor turn our backs upon the visible communion of the Church: but to honour and own the freedom of the Gospel, by our constant attendance on the dispensations of it; lest, despising the mercy of God in giving them to us so publicly, we provoke him, at length, most justly to necessitate us to those retirements, which now so very many, out of sloth or faction, do so much affect. I pray God, that this proves not the sad and direful consequence of that contempt, that is cast upon the public, by some persons, whose only study and business it is to divide Christ, and make rents and schisms in his body the Church.

Now the Public Duties, which are necessary to the right sanctifying of the Lord's Day, are these:

1st. Affectionate Prayer, in joining with the minister, who is our mouth unto God, as well as God's mouth unto us.

For, as he is entrusted to deliver his sovereign will and commands, so likewise to present our requests unto the throne of his grace. We ought heedfully to attend to every petition: to dart it up to heaven, with our most earnest desires; and to close and seal it up, with our affectionate *Amen*, So be it. For, though it be the minister alone that speaks, yet it is not the minister alone that prays; but the whole congregation, by him, and with him; and whatsoever petition is not accompanied with thy most sincere and cordial affections, it is as much mocking of God, as if thine own mouth had uttered it without the concurrence of thy heart: which is most gross hypocrisy. Consider what promises are made to particular Christians, when they pray singly, and by themselves: *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, h will* grant *it you:* John xv. 16, and xvi. 23. What great prevalency then must the united prayers of the Saints have; when they join interests, and put all the favour, that each of them hath at the Throne of Grace, into one common stock! When we come to the public prayers, we are not to come as auditors, but as actors: we have our part in them; and every petition, that is spread before God, ought to be breathed from our very hearts and souls: which if we affectionately perform, we may have good assur-

ance, that what is ratified by so many votes and suffrages here on earth, shall likewise be confirmed in heaven. For our Saviour hath told us, Matt. xviii. 19: *That if two shall agree* together *on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them* by his *Father which is in heaven.*

2dly. Our reverent and attentive Hearing of the Word of God either read or preached, is another public duty necessary to the sanctification of the Sabbath.

This was observed also in the times of the Law, before Christ's coming into the world: Acts xv. 21. *Moses, of old time, hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath Day.* Their synagogues were built for this very purpose: and, as their temple was the great place of their legal and ceremonial worship; so these were, for their moral and natural worship. In the temple, they chiefly sacrificed; and, in their synagogues, they prayed, read, and heard. And every town, and almost every village, had one erected in it, as now our churches are: where the people, on the Sabbath-Day, assembled together, and had some portion of the Law read and expounded to them. Much more ought we to give our attendance on this holy ordinance, now, in the times of the Gospel; since a greater measure of spiritual knowledge is required from us, and the mysteries of salvation are more clearly declared unto us. And may that tongue wither, and that mouth be for ever silenced, which shall dare to utter any thing in contempt and vilifying of this holy ordinance! For such excellent things are spoken of the preaching of the Gospel, that *it is the power of God:* 1 Cor. i. 18. that it is the salvation of those who believe: v. 21; that it is the sweet *savour of the knowledge* of God: 2 Cor. ii. 14: that, certainly, whosoever disparageth it, rejecteth against himself the counsel of God; and neglects the only appointed means for the begetting of faith, and so for the obtaining of eternal salvation: for *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*: Rom. x. 17.

2dly. Another public duty pertaining to the sanctifying of the Lord's Day, is Singing of Psalms.

For this day being a festival unto God, a day of spiritual joy and gladness, how can we better testify our joy, than by our melody? *Is any man merry?* saith St. James, chap. v. 13, *let him sing psalms.* And, therefore, let profane spirits deride this how they please; yet, certainly, it is a most heavenly and spiritual duty. The holy angels, and the spirits of just men in heaven, are said to sing Eternal Hallelujahs unto the Great King: and if our Sabbath be typical of heaven, and the work of the Sabbath represents to us the everlasting work of these blessed spirits, how can it be better done, than

when we are singing forth the praises of him that sits upon the throne, and of the Lamb our Redeemer? This is to join with the heavenly choir in their heavenly work; and to observe a Sabbath here, as like that eternal Sabbath there, as the imperfection of earth can resemble the glory and perfection of heaven.

4thly. Another public duty belonging unto the sanctifying of the Lord's Day, is the administration of the Sacraments, especially that of the Lord's Supper.

And therefore it is mentioned, Acts xx. 7, *Upon the First Day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,* that is, to partake of the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, *Paul preached unto them:* which intimates, that the primary intent of their assemblies was to receive the Lord's Supper; and that, upon occasion of this, the Apostle instructed them by preaching. It is most evident by all the records of the Church, that it was the apostolic and primitive custom to partake of this most holy ordinance every Lord's Day, * and that their meetings were chiefly designed for this; to which were annexed prayer and preaching. I am afraid, Sirs, that one of the great sins of our age is not only the neglect and contempt of this ordinance by some, but the seldom celebrating it by all. The Apostle, where he speaks of this holy institution, intimates, that it should be frequently dispensed and participated: 1 Cor. xi. 26; *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup.* Let us consider, then, what dishonour they reflect upon Christ, who, although this ordinance be too seldom administered, yet either totally withdraw themselves from it, or very rarely partake of it. I shall no longer insist upon this, but leave it to God and your own consciences: for, certainly, if either persuasion, or demonstration itself could prevail against resolution, enough hath been many times said heretofore, to spare me the labour of making this complaint any more. And, thus much, concerning the Sanctification of the Lord's Day, in the Public Duties of his Worship and Service.

But what! hast thou no Sabbath-Work to do, after thou returnest from the congregation and public assemblies? Yes, certainly, the day is not done when the church dissolves; and the whole of it is holy to the Lord. And, therefore,

[2] When you return every one to your families, there are Private and Family-Duties to be performed.

Walks and visits are not to be evening-work of the Sabbath: but holy and spiritual conferences are then proper; either to bring to your remembrance the truths you before have heard, or to engage your own hearts, or the hearts of others, to admire and magnify

* Yea, *Hieron. ad Lucinium. & Aug. Serm. in Monte* 12, say every day.

God for all his great wonders of providence and redemption. Indeed, if a walk be thus improved, it may be a walk to heaven. So we find the two disciples, who on this day were walking to Emmaus, how they entertained themselves, and shortened their way with spiritual and holy discourses: Luke xxiv. 13, 15. But those, who have families to look after, will be best employed, in seeing that those, who are under their charge, spend the vacant time of the Sabbath in holy exercises; either reading the Scripture, or giving an account of what truths they have been taught, or joining with them in praises and prayer unto God: or, indeed, in all of these, in their several courses and order; till night calls for repose, and delivers them over, with a sweet seasoning and blessing, to the labours and employments of the ensuing day and week. And,

[3] If there be any spare time from these public and private duties, then sanctify it by entering into thy Closet; and there unbosom thy soul before God in secret prayer, spread thy requests before him, lay open thy wants and desires. And though, perhaps, thou art not gifted to word a prayer, yet sigh and groan out a prayer: for thy God hears thee; and he understands the language of sighs, and knows the meanings of his Spirit in the inarticulate groans of his children. Here, likewise, in secret, meditate on what thou hast heard: admire the glory of God in his works, the goodness of God in his providences, the infinite mercy of God in his promises. Certainly, meditation is one great duty of a Sabbath; without which, to hear the word of God only, is but to swallow our meat without chewing it. It is meditation, that makes it fit for nourishment: this sucks the juice and sweetness out of it, concorporates it into us, and turns it into life and substance.

Thus if we endeavour to sanctify the Lord's Day, the Lord will sanctify his day and his ordinances unto us: and, by them, convey so much joy and comfort into our souls, that they shall be a temporary heaven unto us; and fit us for that eternal sabbath, where we shall continually give praise and glory unto him, that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

So much for the Fourth and last Commandment of the First Table.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND TABLE.

The whole sum of practical religion consists, either in those duties which immediately concern the worship and service of God, or those which immediately concern our converse with and demeanour towards men. Both are compendiously prescribed in the Dec-

alogue: the former sort, in the First; the latter, in the Second Table of the Law.

I have already, according to my designed method, finished the Exposition of the Four Precepts of the First Table: and have discoursed to you, both concerning the Internal and also the External Worship of God.

It remains now in pursuance of this work, to pass unto the consideration of the duties and precepts of the Second Table; all which do concern Man, as their primary and immediate object.

But here, by the way, let us observe the distance, that God puts between himself and us. We are, as it were, set at another table from him, as being infinitely inferior to his great and glorious Majesty.

First he prescribes what concerns himself; and, then, what concerns us: which teacheth us,

First. That, in all our actions, whether civil or sacred, God ought principally to be regarded, his glory ought to be our highest aim and end. This we are to seek, in the first place; and, for the sake and interest of this, to promote the good and benefit of men. This, therefore, condemns those, who disturb and pervert the order of the Law; and, instead of serving men out of respect to God, serve God merely out of respect to men.

Secondly. This teacheth us to observe our due distance from God. He challengeth all possible reverence from us, insomuch that he will not permit so great a disparagement to his honour, as to have his concerns intermingled and blended with ours, no, not in the same table. And this checks the insolence of those, who dare to rush in upon God with that malapert sauciness, which is too common among some brainsick people in our days: who think that communion with God consists in a familiar rudeness; and that they never draw near enough unto him, unless they run upon his very neck. But this only by the way.

Now in this Second Table are contained Six Precepts, all of them enjoining our duty towards men. And he may be considered, either as our superior, our equal, or our inferior. Our duty towards our superiors and inferiors (which are correlates) is prescribed in the first of these six which I have now read unto you, and our duty towards our equals in the other five.

All which do respect our neighbour, either, in his person: or, in the exterior gifts of wealth and credit.

His person is to be considered, either naturally, or mystically.

Naturally, as he is in himself and his own person: and so the Sixth Commandment provides for his security: *Thou shalt not kill.*

Mystically, as he is in the state of marriage, which of two makes one flesh: and so care is taken for him in the Seventh Commandment: *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

If we consider him in respect of his external gifts of wealth and good name, so we shall find that the first is fenced about and secured by the Eighth Commandment: *Thou shalt not steal.*

His credit and good name is secured by the Ninth: *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

And, because the violation of these laws by outward and flagitious acts proceeds from the latent wickedness and concupiscence of the heart, therefore God, who is a spirit, and whose law and authority can reach even to the soul and spirit, hath not only prohibited the gross perpetration of these crimes, but hath strictly forbidden the inward and secret intention of them, charging us not to harbour so much as a thought of desire towards them, in the Tenth Commandment, *Thou shalt not covet.*

In the due performance of all these, consists the observance of that Second Great Command, Matt. xxii. 39, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

I shall begin with the first of these, HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER; which respects the mutual duties of superiors and inferiors.

And here we have a Precept and a Promise.

The PRECEPT is, to honour them.

The PROMISE, THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG UPON THE LAND, WHICH THE LORD THY GOD GIVETH THEE.

1. Here we may, as formerly we have done, observe a ray of the infinite wisdom of God, in the order and method of this Commandment.

For, after he had prescribed laws for his own honour, his NEXT CARE IS FOR THE HONOUR OF OUR PARENTS; because they are, next under God, the authors and original of our lives and beings.

God, indeed, is properly and primarily our Father; and, of him, is the whole family in heaven and earth named, that is, of him they are and subsist: *In him we* all *live, and move, and have our being.* Earthly parents do but convey to us that being, which God hath beforehand laid up in store for us.

And, therefore, when our Saviour bids us to call *no man father upon the earth; for one is* our *father, which is in heaven:* Matt. xxiii. 9, this must not be understood, as though we ought not to give that name and title of Father to those, who are our earthly parents; the *fathers of our flesh,* as the Apostle styles them, Heb. xii. 9, but only, that their paternity is not so original nor so absolute as God's, who is *the Father of* our *spirits:* who not only forms the mass of our bodies by his secret and wonderful artifice, but creates our souls; and, by his breath, kindles in us such sparks of ethereal fire, as shall never be quenched nor extinct to all eternity. And, therefore, though we owe to the fathers of our flesh honour and reverence, as they are the instruments of our beings; yet we owe much more unto God, even unlimited and boundless respects and obedience, who is the prime cause and author of them.

But, indeed, this word, *Father,* hath also another sense in our Saviour's speech. For the Jews were wont to call their doctors and instructors by the name of fathers; and gave up themselves, without hesitation or contradiction, to believe and follow their dictates.

Now, when our Saviour bids us to *call no man father on earth,* his meaning is, that we must not so mancipate ourselves either to the commands or doctrine of any man, as to prejudice the authority which God, the great and universal Parent of All Things, challengeth over us; but, still, our obedience to their injunctions, and our belief of their instructions, ought to be cautioned with a subordination to the commands and notices of the Divine Will: yet we may call and honour others as fathers, by yielding them a secondary respect, subservient to the honour and glory of God.

This command, of honouring our parents, is very large and comprehensive, and not to be limited only to the grammatical signification of the word, but extends itself to all that are our superiors. And that appears, because honour belongs principally only to God: but, secondarily, and by way of derivation, it belongs also unto those, whom God, the Great King, hath dignified, and made as it were nobles in his kingdom. For, as the king is the fountain of honour within his dominions; so God, who is the Universal Monarch of all the World, is the true fountain of honour among mankind, ennobling some above others by titles and pre-eminencies which he bestows upon them: and all such superiors, whom he hath been pleased thus to raise, are to be honoured by us as our fathers. And, therefore,

First. Our Governors and magistrates are our Fathers, and so to be accounted and reverenced by us. Indeed, they are *Patres*

Patriæ, "the Fathers of their Country:" for all government being at the first domestic and paternal, the father or chief of the family having power of life and death over his children, necessity at last taught them to devolve both the care and the authority of this charge upon some selected persons, to whom they committed the government both of themselves and theirs: so that magistrates, succeeding in the place and office of parents, are now the public fathers; having the same power devolved upon them, which formerly resided in the fathers of families. Hence we read that common and successive name of the kings of the Philistines, Abimelech; which signifies, The King, my Father.

Secondly. The Master of a Private Family is, likewise, a Father: and that, not only with respect unto his children, but to his very servants. And, therefore, 2 Kings v. 13, we find that Naaman is called Father by his servants: *My Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing*, &c.

Thirdly. A Teacher in any Art, Science, or Invention is, likewise, called a Father. Thus, Gen. iv. 20, 21, Jabal is said to be *the father of such as dwell in tents*; and Jubal, to be *the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.*

Fourthly. A Superior in Wisdom and Counsel is, likewise, called a Father. So, in Joseph's speech, Gen. xlv. 8, *God hath made me a father to Pharaoh.*

Fifthly. The Ministers of the Gospel have, likewise the honourable titles of Father conferred upon them. And that, both because indeed they are superior to the people in things appertaining unto God, having the dispensation of the grace of the Gospel committed unto them; and because likewise, through the concurrence of the Spirit's operation with their ministry, they beget souls unto Jesus Christ. Thus, St. Paul tells the Church, 1 Cor. iv. 15, that he was their Father, having *begotten* them *through the Gospel.* And, therefore, we have great reason to magnify our office: in the execution and performance of which we ought to demean ourselves as fathers, with all gravity and authority; and to let those know, whose petulant affronts and scorns tend to the vilifying both of our persons and functions, that they despise not us only, but Jesus Christ who hath sent us, and the Eternal Father who hath sent him. So he himself hath told us, Luke x. 16, *He, that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he, that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.*

Sixthly. Superiors in any Gift of Divine Providence, whether of riches, or of age, or of knowledge, and the like, are to be reverenced and honoured by us as Fathers. So, 1 Tim. v. 1, 2, The *elders entreat as fathers*; ... and *the elder women, as mothers.*

So that you see how large and copious this word *Father* is, taking in many other relations and states of men, besides those, to whom it is now commonly applied.

Here, then, in opening to you the sum of this Commandment, I shall endeavour to show you what are the mutual and reciprocal duties of these following relations.

i. Of natural Parents, and their Children.

ii. Of Magistrates supreme and subordinate, and their subjects.

iii. Of Husband and Wife: for, there, likewise, is a superiority resident in one, and obedience due from the other.

iv. Of Masters and Servants.

v. Of Ministers, and the People committed to their charge.

vi. The duties of those, who have a superority either in the gifts of God's grace or of his bounty, towards those that are inferior to them; and of theirs, reciprocally, towards those that excel.

For all these are Fathers, and honour is required to be given them by virtue of this Command.

I know I am now entering upon a work, which, to many, will be very harsh and unpleasing. For, as there is nothing, wherein the truth and power of godliness and the very life of religion is more concerned, than a conscientious performance of relative duties; so there is nothing that grates and jars more upon the spirits of men, than to be put in mind of and reproved about these duties, which are of such common and daily occurrence in the whole course of our lives. Yet, I beseech you, lay your prejudices and affections under the authority of God's word; and be persuaded to believe these things to be exceeding weighty and momentous, how plain soever they may be, which not only the light and law of nature dictate unto us, but the Spirit of God hath been pleased frequently to recommend in the Holy Scriptures; yea, more frequently, and more expressly, than any other duties whatsoever.

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i. I shall, therefore, begin first, with the Mutual Duties of PARENTS and CHILDREN. And here I shall speak,

Of the Honour that is due to Parents from their Children.

And, then, what Parents are obliged to do for their Children.

1. For the *former* of these, the Command saith, HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

Now this Honour, which they are to defer unto them, consists in these Four things, Reverence, Obedience, Retribution, and Imitation.

(1) Children are to Reverence their parents.

Now reverence is nothing, but an awful love; a fearfulness to

offend, out of the respect we bear them. It is not such a fear, as terrifies and drives us from the presence and company of those whom we dread; for that is slavish and tormenting: but a genuine, sweet, and obliging fear; a fearful esteem and veneration; a fear, that will engage us to attend on them, to observe and imitate them, and to abstain from doing any thing that might grieve or trouble them.

This reverence which we owe our parents, is wont to express itself outwardly by two things, Speeches and Gestures.

[1] Our speeches must be full of respect and honour; giving unto them the highest titles, that their quality and condition will admit.

They must, likewise, be very few, and very humble and submissive. Talkativeness is an argument of disrespect; and, by the answers of the lips, the heart is tried and sounded. Therefore, we find how mildly and reverently Jonathan speaks to his father Saul: although he were then pleading for his David, and managing the concernment of his friend's life, which was far dearer to him than his own; yet see with what modesty he urgeth it: 1 Sam. xix. 4. 5, *Let not the king sin against his servant, against David....for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, &c.* And God blessed a speech so well tempered, and so full of soft and melting oratory, with success. Yea, we find an instance of a disobedient son in the parable of our Saviour: Matt. xxi., who, though he obeyed not the commands of his father, yet thought it too shameful a crime not to give him good words and reverened titles: verse 30, *I go, Sir.* And, certainly, it is but fit and meet, that we should give them the best and the most obliging language, who have taught us to speak; and to please them with our words, who have instructed us how to form them. Yea, that rude and boisterous language, which many of the sons of Belial use towards their parents, is so odious and detestable unto God, that he hath, in his Law, threatened to punish it with the same punishment, as blasphemy against himself: Exod. xxi. 17, *He, that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.* And, Prov. xx. 20, He, that *curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.*

[2] We must likewise show them reverence in our Gestures; and comport ourselves with all lowliness and modesty before them, in bowing the body, and showing all other external signs of respect.

So we find, Gen. xlviii. 12, that Joseph, as highly exalted as he was in the Court of Pharoah, when he brought out his sons to receive the blessing of Jacob his father, *he bowed himself with his face to the earth.* And, on the contrary, that an ill-conditioned look towards a parent, is severely threatened: Prov. xxx. 17; *The eye that*

mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

(2) But, as we must honour them with reverence, so especially with Obedience; without which, all external reverence is but mere formality, if not mere mockery.

See that large charter, which God hath given unto parents: Col. iii. 20, *Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

Our obedience to them may be considered, either as active or passive; and we are obliged by God's command to yield them both: active obedience, in whatsoever is not contrary to the will and law of God; passive, in whatsoever they impose upon us that is so.

And, therefore, we are to obey our parents, in whatsoever honest calling and employment they will set us. David, though destined to a kingdom, is yet by his father Jesse appointed to keep the sheep: 1 Sam. xvi. 11. We ought not, till at last we are emancipated and set free by their consent, to enter into wedlock, without their knowledge, or against their consent: for we find the holy fathers have still taken the care of the disposal of their children in this affair; and the Apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 36, 37, declares, that it is in the parents' power, either to marry their children, or to keep them in a single estate: but yet, no question, so, as that children have still a negative vote, and ought not to be forced against their own will and consent. Yea, so far doth the authority of a parent extend, that it reacheth also to the very garb and apparel of their children; who ought to conform themselves therein, according to their allowance and direction: Gen. xxxvii. 3.

But if parents shall abuse their authority, by commanding what is sinful, and what God hath contravened by his law and command; yet children are not hereby disobliged from obedience: but only directed to choose the passive part of it; and to bear their wrath and choler, yea, and their punishments too, with all patience and submission. For, as the Apostle speaks, Heb. xii. 10, they oftentimes chasten us *after their own pleasure;* and yet we are to give them reverence. We ought to bear with their infirmities, whether they be natural or vicious; and endeavour to hide and cover them from others: and, therefore, we read what a curse was laid upon Ham, for disclosing the nakedness of his father: Gen. ix. 25; and, indeed, it is a cursed thing, to expose the nakedness and weakness of our parents to the scorn and derision of others. But this is not all: for,

(3) As we must honour them by reverence and obedience, so

likewise by Remuneration and Retribution; requiting the benefits we have received from them, so far as we are able, and they need.

This the Apostle expressly enjoins: 1 Tim. v. 4, *If any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents:* that is, when they are fallen to poverty or decay, or otherwise require assistance from us, we are obliged liberally, according to our proportion, to afford it. And he affirms that this is good and acceptable before God.

And, therefore, we find our Saviour sharply reprehending that unnatural doctrine among the Scribes and Pharisees, which dispensed with children from the relief of their parents: Matt. xv, 5, 6, *Ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou* mayest *be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free.*

Which place, because it is obscure and intricate, admits of divers expositions.

Some say it was the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, that, although a man did not honour nor support his parents; yet he should be guiltless, if he should tell them that he had offered in the temple a gift for his and their good, and that therefore they could require no more relief from him.

Others, that it was a solemn oath, among the Jews, to swear by the gift or offering, which was brought into the temple, and presented there as a sacrifice before God: which oath was obligatory in the highest degree, whatsoever the matter of it might be: Matt. xxiii. 18. And the Scribes did teach, that, if a man had sworn thus to his parents, "By the gift thou shalt have no profit by me," then he was for ever disobliged from relieving them, were their necessities never so great and urgent. And according to this exposition, the words should be thus translated: *But ye say, Whosoever saith to his father or mother, by the gift if thou have any profit by me,* (where must be understood some curse or imprecation upon themselves, which they did usually express, as, Let me die, or the like) *then he shall be free from the obligation of honouring,* that is, of relieving and maintaining, *his father or mother.*

Whichsoever interpretation be most consonant to the corrupt doctrine of the Scribes, and the corrupt practice of the Jews, (as I suppose the latter is) our Saviour condemns it for a most vile hypocrisy; making the commandments of God of none effect, through their traditions.

Certainly, it is one of the most unnatural sins in the world, for children, who have ability and opportunity to relieve their necessi-

tous parents, to suffer them to want a livelihood and comfortable subsistence, who are the cause and authors of life and being unto their children.

(4) But, we must honour our parents, by Hearkening unto their good Instructions, and Imitating their Godly Practices.

So, Prov. vi. 20, *My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.* For, although good instruction be, for the matter of it, always to be embraced, from whomsoever it shall proceed; yet, when it shall come from a parent, it obligeth us, not only because it is good, but because it is authoritative. Neither are we only to hearken to their counsel, but also to imitate the holy examples of our parents: and, therefore, it is commended in Solomon, that he walked in the steps of his father David.

Suffer me only, in a word, to set home this upon the consciences of stubborn and disobedient children. Consider what your demeanour hath been towards your parents, to whom you owe yourselves, your lives, your education: benefits, that can never be repaid them, although you should undergo all the hardships imaginable to make an acknowledgment of them. Can you imagine the cares, the parching thoughts, the perplexing fears, which your tender parents are continually distracted with, for your good? And will you so requite their love, as to despise their persons, of whom you yourselves are a part, and make their very bowels rebel against them? Certainly, were there any ingenuity of nature, or were not the principles of reason and equity quite spent and extinguished in you, the love and solicitude they have expressed for you would again return unto them if not in equal measures, yet in the most ample and acceptable that it is possible for you to render. And, if there be any of you, who, by your stubbornness and disobedience, have brought down the grey hairs of your parents with sorrow to the grave, consider seriously what an unnatural sin you have been guilty of: and, because you cannot now beg pardon of them, beg pardon of God, the Great and Universal Father of all: beg that he would not revenge your disobedience to your parents, by the disobedience of your children towards you.

Thus you have seen what duties Children owe unto their Parents.

2. Let us now see *what are the reciprocal duties of Parents towards their Children:* for, in all unequal relations, the superiority rests only in one part, yet the duty is divided between both.

The duty, therefore, of parents respects either the temporal or spiritual good of their children: for both are given them in charge.

(1) As for their Temporal Good, two duties are incumbent upon them Protection and Provision.

And both of these the Law of Nature teacheth them. Do we not see, even in brute creatures themselves, that a strong parental affection makes them dare unequal dangers, and expose their own lives to the greatest hazard, only to defend their young? We see with what indefatigable industry they either lead them unto, or bring them in their food and nourishment; till they have taught them the art and method of providing for themselves, and living at their own finding. And, if the instinct and impulse of nature be so powerful in irrational creatures, how much more should it prevail in us, in whom reason should perfect nature: and we be the more careful, inasmuch as the charge committed to us is more noble: and that it is not a sparrow nor a chicken, that we are to look after; but a man, a king of the universe, designed for great employments and to great ends, an heir of the world; and, if we fail not in educating him, one who may be an heir of eternal glory!

[1] We owe them Protection.

And this their weakness and helplessness often call for at our hands. How many diseases and dangers is their feeble infancy exposed unto! and, in their growing childhood, want of care and experience runs them daily into more. Now, parents are to be their guards: and, by their skill and strength, fence off those wrongs and injuries, that threaten them: and, in so doing, they perform, not only a parental, but an angelical work. *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven:* Matt. xviii. 10. And if God, the Great Father of the whole Family both in Heaven and Earth, hath, out of his infinite tenderness and compassion appointed his holy angels to be their guardians, that they, who attend the throne of his glorious majesty, should likewise attend the cradles, and beds, and wandering steps of little ones; it is not only inhuman, for parents to neglect the care of their children, but devilish to do them hurt, or to destroy them themselves: the too common practice of many wretches, who, to hide and cover their shame, either abandon or murder the fruit of their bowels.

[2] As parents owe their children protection from incident evils, so likewise provision of necessaries and conveniencies, according, to the rank and degree in which the Divine Providence hath set them.

And this the Scripture often inculcates: Matt. vii. 9, 10; *What man is there* among *you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone,? Or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a scorpion?* intimating unto us, that we are bound to give our children what is fit for the sustentation of that life, which they have received from us. And,

indeed, they are our flesh and our bone: they are ourselves multiplied. Now nature teaches us to cherish and nourish our own flesh, as the Apostle speaketh: Eph. v. 29. Nay, the Apostle hath laid this charge exceeding high: 1 Tim. v. 8; *If any* man *provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel:* and that, because even the infidels and heathens are taught by the light and law of Nature, to make provision for their own. And this provision is not only for the present, but our care is to extend farther: and, according to our ability, bating the expenses of decency and charity, we are to take care for their future subsistence; and, if we cannot leave them a patrimony, we are to leave them an art and calling, whereby, through the blessing of God, they may procure their own livelihood. So the Apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 14. *The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.* And, if we must place them out to a vocation, we must endeavour, with all our prudence, to fit it to their genius and inclination: for, otherwise, it will not be a vocation, but a vexation unto them, all their days: still remembering, that, if we piously design any unto the work of the Lord, it should be those, who are most pregnant, and whom God hath endowed with the greatest gifts for so high a ministration. For it is a sin, very like to that of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, to consecrate priests unto the Lord of the refuse and vilest of the people; and to think those fit enough for the temple, who, through the deformity of their body or the defects of their minds, are not fit for a shop, or for any other employment.

And, so much, for those duties of Parents, which concern the Temporal Good of their Children.

(2) But then they are obliged to others, of a higher and nobler nature, which concern their Spiritual Good, and have an influence into their eternal happiness.

[1] And, here, their first duty is to Incorporate them into the Church of Christ, by the presenting them to holy baptism; which is the laver of regeneration, and which Jesus Christ hath instituted for the admission and initiation of new members into his body the Church, and of new subjects into his kingdom.

Nay, it is not an empty bare ceremony; but it is a seal of the promise of the covenant, a sign of the grace of the Spirit and a means appointed to convey it to the soul. And, therefore, those parents are highly injurious to their children, who, either through carelessness or contempt, debar them from so excellent and spiritual an ordinance and privilege; yea, indeed, the only spiritual priv-

ilege, which their age makes them capable of. What do they else hereby, but put their children into a worse condition than the children of the Jews? who, in their infancy, were admitted to the sacrament of Circumcision, which the Apostle calls *a seal of the righteousness of faith:* Rom. iv. 11; and, certainly, if this seal of circumcision were broken by the coming of Christ, and no other were instituted whereof the children of believers under the Gospel might be made partakers; our infants then must needs be in a worse condition than theirs; and Christ's coming into the world hath, in this respect, rather diminished the privileges of the Church, than enlarged them. It ought, therefore, to be the first and chiefest care of every godly parent, to offer his children to this holy ordinance: especially considering, that they are partakers of his sinful and corrupt nature, that he hath been an instrument of conveying down along to them the guilt of the first transgression, and that defilement which hath infected the whole soul; and therefore it is the least that his charity can do for them, to offer them unto that remedy, which our Saviour hath provided both to remove the guilt, and cleanse away the filth of their natures. For, be the parents themselves never so holy and sanctified, yet their children are born in their filth, and in their blood. And this Austin expresseth by a very apt similitude. "The chaff," saith he,* "is carefully separated from the wheat that we sow; and yet the wheat, which it produceth, groweth up with husks and chaff about it." So those, whom the Holy Ghost hath sanctified and cleansed, yet produce children naturally unclean, though federally holy. And, therefore, being born within the promises of the covenant, their parents ought to see that the seal of the covenant be applied unto them; that is, as they derive corruption from them, they may by them be brought to the means of cleansing and washing.

[2] When they are thus initiated and entered into the Church of Christ, another duty that parents owe them is, to Instruct and Admonish them, to Educate them in the Fear and Knowledge of God.

And this the Apostle expressly enjoins, Eph. vi. 4; *Ye fathers.... bring up* your children *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* And, so, Deut. iv. 9. Forget not *the things which thine eyes have seen.... but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.* We find that God gives an honourable testimony concerning Abraham, and confides in him upon this account: Gen. xviii. 19; *I know* Abraham, *that he will command his children and his household after him,*

* *Sicut præputium, quod per circumcisionem aufertur, manet in iis quos gignunt circumcisi; sicut palea, quæ opere humano tantâ diligentiâ separatur, manet in fructu qui de purgato tritico noscitur.* Aug. Ep. 222.

and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. And Solomon extols his father David for his care in instructing him: Prov. iv. 3, 4; *I was my father's son* .... and *he taught me also, and said unto me, Let thy heart retain my words: keep my commandments and live.*

The instruction must not be nice and critical, but familiar and obvious; teaching them such fundamental truths and principles of Christian Doctrine, as are of absolute necessity to be known, and in such a manner as may be most suitable to their capacity and discretion.

And if parents would be but careful and conscientious in the performance of this duty, infusing into their minds, before they are filled with vanity, the knowledge of God, and of Christ, and of Religion; and forming their wills, whilst they are flexible, to the love of piety and virtue; the next generation would not generally see so much debauchery in youth, nor so much obduracy in old age, as is now every where too visible and apparent. By this means, the minister's work would be half done to his hands. It would be needful only to feed his flock with strong meat; and to press them only to a vigorous and cheerful performance of those duties of holiness, to which their pious education made them before inclinable.

This way of instruction is either.

1st. By reading to them or causing them to read the Holy Scriptures; and pointing out to them those observables, which are most agreeable to their age and apprehensions.

Thus it is said of Timothy, that *from a child* he had known *the Holy Scriptures:* 2 Tim. iii. 15. And, doubtless, he was trained up in that knowledge, by the care of his mother and grandmother, whom the Apostle honourably commends, Chap. i. 5. And,

2dly. By catechising and instructing them in the grounds and principal doctrines of religion.

Indeed, a continued discourse is not so informing, nor doth it fasten and rivet instruction into young minds so well, as where it is diversified by questions and answers. This makes them masters of their own notions; and able to wield and manage them afterwards, to their better advantage. And, truly, this I take to be the very reason why so many sit grossly ignorant, under many years' preaching of the word unto them; scarce able to give any tolerable account of the very first principles of the oracles of God, because they were never educated in this way of catechising, they were never tried, nor searched, nor the strength of their memories and capacities, exercised by questions. For running and continued

discourses are like the falling of rain upon a smooth rock, where it trickles off as it descends: but questions and examinations are like digging of it, and making it fit to retain what is poured upon it.

But whatsoever method you may judge most profitable; yet, certainly, instruction, in their tender years, is absolutely necessary to season them betimes with the knowledge of the grounds of religion, and a love and veneration of piety, which will afterwards have a mighty influence to keep them from being led away either with the errors or ungodly practices of lewd and ungodly men. *Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it*: Prov. xxii. 6. For, when the reluctance of corrupted nature is thus early mastered, and virtue habituated in them, (as there must be strong convictions and almighty grace, to break off the long accustomed habits of sin: so) there must be very powerful and prevalent temptations, that shall induce such an one, whose knowledge of God and love of virtue have grown up with him from his childhood, to turn a recreant to his former profession and practice; and to forget that, before which he can hardly remember any thing: or if, through the violence of temptation, he should be hurried into any extravagancy and excess, his conscience hath a greater advantage to reduce him again, than it hath upon others, who are trained up ignorantly and barbarously. It will still pursue him, and disturb him in his sins; and his early notions of piety and religion will imbitter the sweets, which he fancied, and others perhaps find in them; and his conscience will never leave crying, and clamouring, and threatening, till it bring him back, with tears in his eyes, and sorrow in his heart, and shame in his face, to his former regular and unblamable conversation.

[3] Another duty, which parents are obliged unto, is not only the giving of their children good instructions, but good Examples, to set before them the copies and pattern of those virtues, which they teach.

And this, indeed, is the most lively and the most effectual way to profit them. Thou who before thy child blasphemest the Name of God by swearing or cursing, thou who abusest thyself and others by riot and intemperance, dost thou expect that ever he should reverence that holy and dreadful Name which thou profanest; or love that sobriety and temperance, which thou possibly mayest commend to him in words, but dost much more forbid him by thy deeds? For it is the glory and boast of children, to be and to do like their parents. And although there be few so forlornly wicked and utterly abandoned over unto vice, but that they would have

their children love and practise virtue, and may perhaps sometimes exhort them thereunto; yet, alas, what effect can empty words have, when they are contradicted and overborne by deeds? When the corrupt nature thou hast given them shall be improved by the ill examples thou daily givest them, what avail all thy exhortations and admonitions, unless it be to upbraid and reproach thyself, and increase both thine own condemnation and theirs too?

Even the heathen satirist (Juvenal) could say, *Maxima debetur puero reverentia:* "We ought to reverence and stand in awe of children:" that they see nothing vicious or dishonest by us, not so much for the shame of it as the example. For there is no pest so contagious, as vice: the least converse will serve to rub it upon others; especially parents' vice upon their children; who, if they think it not obedience and a part of duty to imitate them, yet cannot but conclude themselves secure both from reproofs and correction.

The practice of superiors hath, certainly, a mighty influence in forming the manners of those who are subject to them: for let them prescribe what rules and enact what laws they please, let their authority be as great as can be, yet their example will be far greater than their authority; and inferiors will be encouraged by it boldly to transgress, when shame and consciousness shall tie up the hands of those who should punish them. But now, when a godly parent shall not only, with the most tender and affectionate words that love can dictate, instruct his children in the ways of holiness, but walk before them in those ways; not only by admonitions, show it to be most rational, but by constant practice show it to be most pleasant and delightful; certainly, that nature must needs be most deplorably vicious, which can in this case be refractory, and will not go whither both wind and tide lead him: whereas others, possibly, who have only the breath of good instructions, are carried away headlong and drowned in perdition, by the stronger current of evil examples.

[4] If neither instructions nor good examples will prevail, then Correction and Discipline is necessary; and becomes a duty, though perhaps it may be as grievous to the parent to inflict it, as it is to the children to suffer it.

I know there may be, and often is, excess in this kind; when choler and passion prescribe the measures of punishment. This is fierce and inhuman tyranny, and argues such parents to be devoid of natural affection. And this immoderate, ungoverned correction, is so far from profiting children, that it oftentimes exasperates them, and makes them the more stubborn and untractable; or else it only dispirits and stupifies them. And, therefore, the Apostle hath twice

cautioned parents against this provoking way of discipline; Eph. vi. 4, *Ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath.* And again: Col. iii. 21, *Fathers provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*

Yet, notwithstanding, where age and decency will allow it, and prudence doth require it, it is sometimes necessary to use the severity of discipline.

And let not a foolish fondness here interpose: for, certainly, God loves his children with a much more parental affection, than you can love yours; and yet he tells us, Rev. iii. 19, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* And the Apostle tells us, Heb. xii. 6, *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* If there be not a due exercise of discipline and correction, nothing else can be expected, but that our children will wax wanton with us; and, next, rebel against us.

Now this severity must be used betimes, before age and spirit have hardened them against the fear or smart of correction. The wise man hath told us, Prov. xiii. 24, *He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.* This is the way;

1st. To deliver him from greater sufferings and mischiefs, that else will follow. Better the rod, than the tree. Thou mayst, for aught thou knowest, redeem his life by it; and deliver him from the hand of justice, and eternal wrath of God; and save his soul from everlasting smart and torment. So, Prov. xxiii. 13, 14; *Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.* And,

2dly. By this course thou shalt bring thyself much comfort: most likely, in his reformation; or if not in that, yet at least in the conscience of having performed thy duty, and done all that lay in thy power for his good. But what support and comfort can that parent have, who, when his children grow lewd and debauched, shall sadly reflect upon it, that it was only his fondness and foolish pity which ruined them? Take this for certain, that as many deserved stripes as you spare from the child, you do but lay upon your own backs; and those, whom you have refused to chastise, God will make severe scourges to afflict and chastise you.

And these are the duties, which you owe to your children, immediately respecting their Spiritual Good: initiating them by baptism; giving them good instructions, good examples, and necessary correction.

(3) There is one duty more, and it is a very principal one, which respects both their Temporal and Spiritual Good: and that is, fer-

vent and earnest Prayer to God for them; without which, all the rest will be ineffectual.

Whenever, therefore, thou comest unto the Throne of Grace, bring these thy dear pledges upon thy heart with thee. Earnestly implore of God, that he would own them, and provide for them, as his own children: that he would adopt them into the family of heaven, make them heirs of glory, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ: that he would give them a convenient portion of good things for this life, that they may serve him with the more cheerfulness and alacrity; and a large portion of spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus, and at length bring them to the heavenly inheritance. And know assuredly, that the prayers of parents are very effectual; and have a kind of authority in them, to imperate and obtain what they sue for.

This is the benediction or blessing, which holy fathers in Scripture have bestowed upon their children; and we find that their blessing was their destiny. Thus Jacob blessed his sons, the patriarchs; and, as it were, divided among them the treasures of God's blessings: and God, the Great Father, would not have the blessings of a father pronounced in vain, but ratified and fulfilled them in the success.

And, as parents' blessings have great influence upon their children, so likewise have their curses: and, therefore, they should beware what they wish or pray against them. A rash and passionate curse is oftentimes direfully fulfilled not only to the ruin of the children, but to the too late sorrow and repentance of the parents. We know how deep the curse of Noah stuck in Ham, and all his posterity. For the words of a father are weighty and authoritative, even with God himself; and he will not lightly suffer them to fall to the ground, when they are spoken either for or against those, over whom he himself hath given them power and authority.

I shall close up this with one word to those, who are parents. Consider what a great charge God hath intrusted you with. In your hands are deposited the hope and blessing, or else the curse and plague, of the next age. Your families are the nurseries both of Church and State; and, according to the manuring of them now, such will their fruits be hereafter. Consider, I beseech you, how you have managed this great trust. Are your *children like olive-branches round about* your *table*, each promising to bring forth good fruit in due season? Have you taken care, by your good instructions and good examples, to form the Lord Jesus in them? Have you taken care, by correction and discipline, to cut off all excrescencies

and *superfluities of naughtiness* from them? Or, do they remain still sons of Belial: wild, rude, unnurtured, and disobedient? Certainly, God will require an account of them at your hands: for they are his, and only left in your keeping, and to your education. But, alas, the lewd practices, and the too ripe sins of young ones, do clearly convince parents, rather to have infused wickedness into them, than curbed it. And the wit and forwardness of their wickedness, beyond their years, make it evident, that they have but borrowed it from your examples. Beware, lest God punish you in them; and punish them for what they have learnt of you, and you in hell for not better instructing and admonishing of them.

And, if any of you have reason sadly to complain of the stubbornness and disobedience of your children, I beseech you seriously to reflect upon the cause of it; and consider whether it may not be justly imputed to thy want of care in their education, or to the bad examples thou hast given them; or, possibly, by their rebellion and undutifulness towards thee, God justly punisheth thy rebellion and undutifulness towards thy father. I remember a story of a graceless and desperate young wretch, who, being thwarted by his aged father in some of his lewd pranks, invaded his grey hairs; and dragged him by them along the ground, to the very threshold of his door: his poor old father suffered it silently till then; but then, looking pitifully upon him, he said, "Son, forbear now, and let me go; for I remember I dragged my father to this very place, and there left him:" and acknowledged the righteous judgment of God in so just a requital. But, whatsoever thy conscience shall suggest to thee to have been a provocation unto God thus to punish thee, (and certainly it is one of the greatest punishments that can befall a man in this world) humbly crave pardon of him, who is thy Father, and beg him, that he would be pleased to turn the hearts of the children unto their fathers, and the hearts of all unto himself.

Thus we have considered the duties of natural parents towards their children, and the duties of children reciprocally towards their parents.

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ii. But there is also another rank of Fathers, and they are political: *Patres Patriæ*, "the Fathers of their Country;" unto whom we owe honour and reverence, by the obligation of this command. And these are the MAGISTRATES and GOVERNORS, that God hath set over us.

They are his deputies and vicegerents upon earth; and the authority, with which they stand invested, is originally in and derivatively from the supreme King of kings, and Lord of all lords. Their kingdoms are but the several provinces of his universal em-

pire. He hath given them their patent, to be his lieutenants and viceroys: for by him *kings reign and princes decree justice:* Prov. viii. 15; not by his permission only, but by his ordinance and appointment. And, whereas a great and conspicuous part of the image of God consists in his sovereignty and dominion, he hath so expressly stamped this image of his upon them, that, for their likeness to him in it, he gives them the same glorious name by which himself is known: Ps. lxxxii. 6, *I have said, Ye are Gods;* and Exod. xxii. 28, *Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.** And our Saviour tells us, John x. 35, That they are *called gods,* because *the word of God came* unto them: the word of God, that is, the appointment and commission, which they have received from God.

It is observable, that, as other inferior creatures revere the very countenance of a man, and those few strictures of the defaced image of God which are still remaining there; and that, although they far exceed in strength, yet they dare not, unless enraged, make use of it against their natural, though weaker lords: so also, that God hath spread such an awe upon the face of authority, that a look or a word from a lawful magistrate shall more daunt and terrify, than the armed force of an enemy. There is some secret character, that God hath imprinted on them, which makes them venerable; and, although their subjects do as far exceed them in strength, as they do in number: yet strength alone was never made to command, but rather to obey and execute; and power ought to be the servant of authority.

Nor hath God ordained magistracy, only out of respect to some few whom he hath ennobled, that they might enjoy a privilege and prerogative above the common and vulgar sort of men; but he hath ordained it for the general good of mankind. Yea, and I have often and seriously thought, that, next to the invaluable gift of Jesus Christ, the best and the greatest good that God ever gave to the world, was this appointment of magistracy: for, were it not for this, the whole world would be turned into a wilderness, and men into savage beasts, preying one upon another. Did not the fear of man restrain them, when they have cast off the fear of God; did they not dread the infliction of temporal punishments, when they slight the threatenings of eternal; we might be as safe among lions and tigers, as among men; and find better refuge and better society in solitudes, than in cities: within would be fears, without violence; and, every where, tumults, uproars, and destructions; our dwellings, our persons, our possessions, all exposed to the fury of bloody and merciless

* Josephus l. ii. contr. Appion, applies that of Exod. xxii. to the Heathen Gods.

invaders; and, as the prophet speaks, Hosea iv. 2, *By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they* would *break out,* until *blood* touched *blood;* and there would be no more peace nor agreement on earth, than there is in hell. But the All-wise God, who hath subdued the beasts of the earth to man, hath likewise subdued man (who else would become more wild and brutish than they) unto man. So that those, who stand not in any awe of the God of Heaven, yet are awed by the gods of the earth; and whom the thoughts of hell and eternal wrath cannot scare from wickedness, yet many times the thoughts of a prison or of a gibbet doth.

Magistracy, then, being an institution of such great eminency and absolute necessity, let us see what are the duties, of those, who are invested with it towards their subjects:

And, then, the duties of their subjects reciprocally towards them.

1. Of the *first,* I shall speak but briefly, since we are chiefly concerned in the knowledge and practice of the second.

Magistrates, therefore, may be considered, either as supreme or subordinate, according to the distinction the Apostle makes of them: 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14; *The king as supreme;* and *governors, sent by him,* as subordinate. Each of these have their respective duties belonging unto them.

(1) As for Supreme Magistrates, their duty is,

[1] To establish and maintain the true Worship and Service of God; and to purge out all corruptions and abuses, that have any way adulterated it with superstitions or idolatrous mixtures.

God hath appointed a sovereign prince to be *custos utriusque Tabulæ;* "a guardian of both Tables of his Law:" and hath put the sword into his hands, not only to be an avenger, in cases of injury, done by man to man; but to be an avenger, in case of the violation of those laws, which immediately respect his own worship; and to be a reformer of the corruptions of the Church, as well as of the disorders of the State.

Indeed, this power and supremacy, which we thus ascribe unto him, is not formally and intrinsically spiritual or ecclesiastical, but only objectively such. For they neither have the power of Order, which gives authority to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, which properly belongs unto the ministerial office; and whosoever he be, that shall intrude himself thereinto without a lawful call and ordination, be his gifts or place never so eminent, he is guilty of the same presumption that Uzziah was, and may dreadfully expect the same, or a greater punishment: 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, 19; *His heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed .... and*

went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense: and, whilst the censer was in his hand, *the leprosy rose up in his forehead.* Neither have they the power of the Keys committed unto them, to bind and loose, to retain and remit sins by a due pronouncing of ecclesiastical censures. For those two powers, of Order and the Keys, appertain only unto the Ministers of the Gospel; for to them only, were they committed.

Yet princes have a power of jurisdiction over Church-Affairs; and ought, by their laws and authority, to provide, that God be worshipped in his own prescribed way; that heresies be rooted out, schisms and rents healed, stubborn contemners of God's laws, as well as theirs, severely punished, the mouth of blasphemy stopped, ministers commanded to and encouraged in the conscientious performance of their duty; that nothing be tolerated in practice, contrary to the rules of a good life; that nothing be broached in doctrine, contrary to the form of sound words, which hath been delivered unto us. Thus far reacheth the magistrates' duty and authority, in things pertaining unto the Church. And, therefore, we find, in the Scripture, that when the worship of the True God was so much corrupted and forgotten among the Israelites, that Micah, out of a blind and idolatrous devotion, made him a whole chapel of gods to worship, the Holy Ghost gives this as a cause of so great an abomination, that *In those days, there was no king in Israel:* Judges xvii. 6. In Judges xix., we read that tragical history of adultery, and uncleanness unto death; and the very same reason is given for the licentiousness of those times, ver. 1; *In those days, there was no king in Israel.* And this plainly intimates unto us, that, not only adultery and murder, sins against the Second Table of the Law; but also idolatry and false worship, against the First, ought, and might have been either prevented or punished, had there been a king and ruler in Israel; and that it had been his duty to have drawn his sword and exercised his authority against the one, as well as against the other. We read likewise of some kings reproved, because they took not away the high places, but suffered the people still to burn incense on them; notwithstanding they proceeded far in other parts of reformation. Others are commended, that they did remove them. And, among the most renowned acts of Hezekiah's piety, it is mentioned to his immortal honour, that he commanded the Priests and Levites to sanctify themselves, and cleanse the temple, and restore the true worship of God, after many years' interruption, when it was not only disused, but almost forgotten: 2 Chron. xxix. The like also did king Josiah with the like zeal, and received the like approbation and testimony from God.

This, therefore, is the first and chief duty of supreme magistrates, viz., To maintain the true worship and service of God, and to reform whatsoever corruptions and abuses they find to have crept into it.

[2] Another duty is, to appoint Men of approved Ability and Integrity to be in Authority under them.

For, because kings cannot be omnipresent, nor omniscient, it is, therefore necessary that they should hear with other men's ears, and see with other men's eyes, and act with other men's hands; and therefore they ought to make choice of such, as are men of known fidelity and wisdom, to commit so great a charge unto: for, be the fountain never so clear, yet the streams must needs be polluted, if they run through filthy channels. Kings, therefore, should do according to the counsel of Jethro: Exod. xviii. 21; *Provide, out of all the people, able men; such, as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness: and place such* as these *over them.* But where this course is not taken; but such are intrusted with command and authority, who either neglect the government of the people, or oppress them in it; what doth the prince, but give away the half or more of his kingdom? for what is not ruled, is lost. Neither should these substitute magistrates be too numerous: for the very multitude of them may possibly be more burdensome to the people, than helpful to the prince.

[3] Magistrates ought to distribute Justice impartially, to maintain the cause of the poor oppressed, and to restrain the insolence of their proud oppressors; to crush them by just authority, who would crush others by their unjust tyranny.

This is a truly royal and princely virtue, which will prove, not only an ornament to the crown, but a safety to the throne: *For the throne is established by righteousness,* saith the Wise Man: Prov. xvi. 12.

[4] Princes and magistrates ought to be most Exemplary for Virtue and Piety.

The eyes of all the people are upon them; and their actions have as great an influence upon their subjects, as their laws. *Facere recte cives suos princeps optimus faciendo docet: cumque sit imperio maximus, exemplo major est,* saith Paterculus *: "A good prince teacheth his subjects to live well, by living well himself: and, although he be greatest in command, is yet still greater in example." And, therefore, he is doubly bound to virtuous actions; both by his conscience, and by his condition: the one, as he respects his own personal good; the other, as he tenders the good of his people: who commonly take their measures from their superiors; and think imitation of their practices, to be a more acceptable service, than obedience to their laws.

* Vell. Paterculus. l. ii.

But I cannot insist upon every particular duty of princes and magistrates, neither perhaps would it be here very proper.

In a word, therefore, they ought to fear God, above all; to seek his honour and glory, who hath raised them to the highest pitch of human honour and glory; to be prudent in their designs. courageous in their performances, faithful in their promises, wise in their counsels, observant of their own laws. careful of their subjects' welfare, merciful to the oppressed, favourable to the good, terrible to the evil, and just towards all. Let them remember these two things: that they are Gods, and therefore should rule and govern as they judge God himself would do, were he visible here upon earth; and that they are Men, and therefore must give an account unto the Great God of all that trust which he hath reposed in them. And, certainly, if they be careful to perform every part of their duty, though we may look only at the splendor and glory of their state; yet the cares and troubles that attend it, will be found so great and weighty, that we shall find it all reason in the world to make the burden of their crowns lighter by our ready and cheerful obedience. It was well observed by the Lord Verulam,* That princes are like the heavenly bodies, which cause good or evil times; and which have much veneration, but no rest.

(2) But then, for Subordinate Magistrates, who receive their authority from the supreme; and are between the people and the prince, as the prince is between the people and God; we have already heard how they ought to be qualified: Exod. xviii. 21. They must be men fearing God, *men of truth, and hating covetousness.*

Their chief duty is, to see that the laws be executed according to their full intent, without respect of persons; neither fearing to punish the rich, nor sparing to punish the poor; making no difference between one person and another, where the cause makes none. For, whosoever are thus partial, want that courage and firmness, that ought to be in a magistrate, and should make him as inflexible as the rule of justice itself is; neither being frightened by the power or threats of those who are great, nor melted or softened with the cries of the mean, but moved only by the cause. And, therefore, the Scripture hath expressly forbidden them, Exod. xxiii. 3, to *countenance a poor man in his cause:* for pity may sometimes as much bribe and corrupt judgment, as rewards. They ought to divest themselves of all passions, private interests and affections: to be impartial in the execution of justice upon the mightiest offender, as well as the meanest; upon their dearest friends and relations, as well as

* Essay of Enpire.

upon strangers and enemies. This will give strength and authority to the laws; which else are but cobwebs made to catch the smaller flies, while the great and strong ones break easily through. This is the way to conciliate reverence and veneration to the laws and government, which, in our days, are most contumeliously despised and vilified; and, by this course, *judgment shall run down* our streets *as a mighty stream.*

In brief, because I would not too long insist upon this subject, though it be large and various, let magistrates, of what rank soever they be, seriously consider that weighty charge given them by God himself: 2 Sam. xxiii. 3; *The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me, He, that ruleth over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of God.*

2. Let us, in the next place, consider *the Duties of Subjects towards their Magistrates and Rulers.* And these are, in the general, three: Honour, Obedience, and Prayer to God for them.

(1) We must Honour and Reverence them. It is the Apostle's command: 1 Pet. ii. 17, *Fear God. Honour the King.*

We must give unto them a Threefold honour: in our Thoughts, in our Speeches, and with our Substance.

[1] We must honour and reverence them in our Thoughts; looking upon them as the lively and visible images of God upon earth.

Indeed, the Divine Perfections are the highest object of our reverence: and, therefore, as you would esteem and honour any for their wisdom or for their holiness, because these are some lineaments and draughts of the image of God: so you ought to reverence those, to whom the Almighty God hath communicated his adorable power and authority: for this also is the image of God in them. Yea, and though it should so happen that they bear no other resemblance unto God, neither in his wisdom, nor justice, nor holiness, but are wicked, cruel, tyrannical, and unwise; yet that power and authority alone, with which they stand invested, challengeth our respect and reverence: for in this, at least, they are like unto God; and whosoever slighteth and despiseth them, slighteth and despiseth one of God's glorious attributes shining forth in them: we ought not to harbour any undervaluing or ill thoughts of them. But, where a people are so happy as to be governed by those magistrates, who have a whole constellation of Divine Attributes shining in them; magistrates, that are just and merciful, wise and holy; they ought to give unto them the greatest reverence that can belong to creatures, and to esteem and respect them next unto God himself. But, although all these should be wanting,

yet that power and authority, which God hath delegated unto them, is truly reverend and awful: and the Wise Man hath commanded us, not *to curse the king, not in* our *thought:* Eccl. x. 2.

We ought to honour and reverence them in our Speeches; speaking what good of them we know, and prudently concealing their vices, or their infirmities.

For, to what else can it tend when we blaze abroad the faults of our governors, but only to loosen the affections of their subjects from them? And how much more horrid a wickedness is it, then, falsely to calumniate them; and, by reviling whispers, to fly-blow the ears of their subjects; and, by little arts, and suspicious intimations, and half-sentences, to insinuate politic jealousies into the minds of the people, and to possess them with nothing but fears and sad apprehensions of what miseries and sufferings are coming upon them, through the mal-administration of affairs, and either the design or neglect of their governors! all which tends to nothing, but to make the people either disdain or hate them. I beseech you beware, that you do not, by misrepresentations, traduce the actions of your lawful rulers; nor hearken to those, who do: whose words and whose breath serve only to blow up the coals of civil dissension, which, if mercy prevent not, will break forth again into a raging and devouring war. Beware, that you suffer none of those leeches to fasten upon you, whose very mouths will draw blood. We have seen the sad experience of it already; and may fear, when we see them use the same methods, that they intend the same effects. The Apostle gives such a black brand: 2 Pet. ii. 10; *Presumptuous are they, self-willed: they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.*

[3] We ought to honour them with our Substance, when the necessity of their affairs and public concernment call for supply.

And, indeed, this is but a debt we owe them: for we have somewhat of theirs in our hands; and it is no unjust demand, for them to require their own. Tributes and public payments are theirs, when made so by law: for the rest is ours, no otherwise than by the same law; and, therefore, to withold what is thus legally bestowed on them is no other than theft, and an unjust detaining of what is none of your own. Hence our Saviour commands us, to *render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's:* Matt. xxii. 21. And the Apostle, Rom. xiii. 7, *Render to all their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour.* And, although possibly, sometimes the burden may fall heavy, yet we ought freely and cheerfully to contribute; partly

considering, that such is the privilege of our kingdoms, that nothing is imposed upon us by violence, but given by ourselves, and is our own act; and, partly, that whatsoever we possess, we owe the enjoyment of it to the blessing of government.

This, therefore, is the first duty we owe unto magistrates, viz., Honour and Reverence.

(2) Another general Duty we owe them, is Obedience.

And, for this, we have as express and frequent commands, as for any duty that belongs to Christian Conversation: Rom. xiii. 1; *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers, that be, are ordained of God,* 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 15. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme: Or unto governors, as .... sent by him; For so is the will of God.* Neither is there any cause whatsoever that can supersede our obedience: for, if their commands be lawful, we are to obey them, by performing what they require; if they be never so wicked and unlawful, we are to obey them, by suffering what they threaten. But because I have had other occasions* largely to treat on this subject, I shall not now further prosecute it.

(3) Another great duty of subjects, is fervent and earnest Prayer for them.

So the Apostle: 1 Tim. ii. 1; *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercesssions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.*

But why for kings? It might seem more necessary, that prayers should be poured out for those, that are afflicted and distressed; who have nothing else to relieve them, besides God and prayer. But kings are in a high and prosperous condition: many seek their favour, and all fear their displeasure.

Yet it is very needful to pray for them; for, indeed, they stand in much more need of our prayers, than private persons do. For,

[1] The Charge laid upon them is greater, and the burdens pressing them are heavier, than what lie upon other men; and, therefore, they should be eased and helped by our prayers.

When St. Paul saith, 2 Cor. xi. 28, that he had *the care of all the Churches* upon him; we may say of a king, that he hath the care of the whole Church, and of the whole State too, incumbent upon him. A crown is a heavy, though a glittering ornament: and how can it be otherwise, when the welfare of so many thousands depends upon them and their counsels? It is their work, to provide for the execu-

* Sermon on 1 Thess. v. 22. Sermon on Jan. 30, at Christ's Church in Dublin.

tion of the laws, the exercise of religion, the restraining and punishing of all impiety and ungodliness. They must see that right and equity be administered, that no injustice nor violence be committed, but all affairs guided according to law and righteousness. These are the constant cares, that attend government: and that, which adds to all these burdens, and makes them out of measure sinking and intolerable, is, that all these burdens must sometimes be borne under the discontents and murmurs of an unsatisfied people. We had need, therefore, to pray earnestly unto God, that so great a trust and so great a burden being committed unto magistrates, they may be endowed by him, through whom kings reign, with abilities to discharge their trust, to his glory, and the comfort of their subjects.

[2] The Account they must render at the Last Day is greater; and, therefore, they more need our prayers than other men.

What they do is usually of general concernment, or else of general influence: and, therefore, they must answer not only for themselves, but for almost the whole nation, who either obey the commands or follow the examples of their governors. We should, therefore, especially pray for them; that, having a greater account to make than other men, they may at that day appear before the King of kings with boldness, and pass from a corruptible crown to a crown of glory and immortality,

[3] Their Temptations are more; and, therefore, they more need our prayers than other men.

For, having all at command; the pleasures, the splendor, and gaiety of the world are more likely to be snares to them than others, who converse not so much with them. And, besides, the Devil is more assiduous and subtle in his temptations towards them than others: because, if they can be perverted by him, they will prove great and most effectual instruments to promote his kingdom. And, therefore, Micaiah's parable, 1 Kings xxii., no sooner had God asked the question, *Who shall persuade Ahab?* but there steps forth an evil spirit, and undertakes the employment. Satan loves to be busy about princes and rulers, because there he thinks he can make the greatest earnings. To tempt private persons, is but to tempt by retail; but to tempt princes, and to seduce the rulers of a land, this is to destroy by wholesale. And, therefore, as they are exposed to more temptations, so should they be supported and strengthened by more prayers.

Let us, therefore, heartily perform this duty to them, and for them; a duty, not more beneficial to them, than to ourselves and the whole nation: for, if we can prevail for a blessing upon them,

we ourselves shall certainly share in it: if, by our fervent prayers we can obtain of God to bestow on them wisdom and zeal, holiness and piety, peace and prosperity, certainly, our own share in these mercies is worth the venture we send for them; and we shall then sit safely under the shadow of our king, and he himself under the shadow of the Almighty.

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iii. I have therefore told you, that this Fifth Commandment comprehends in it, not only the mutual offices between parents and children, but generally all the duties to which both superiors and inferiors stand reciprocally bound: and, therefore, having already spoken of the mutual Duties of Parents and Children, of Magistrates and Subjects; I shall now proceed to consider the Duties of HUSBAND and WIFE: for, in this relation also, though it come nearer to an equality than the former, there is a superority on the man's part, and subjection due unto him from the woman.

And, here, whilst I am treating of this subject. I beseech you give not way to any levity of mind, or vanity of thoughts. Think it not a light, jocular thing; as, too often, the marriage-relation, and the offices that appertain unto it, are accounted: for it is matter of duty, that I am now propounding unto you; and matter of duty is no less than matter of life and death eternal. And, therefore I charge you, that you attend unto it: not to get advantages of sport and merriment one with another, and to object them each to other in a ludicrous and jesting way, as it is every where too common a custom; but attend unto it, as a matter of as great seriousness and weight, as any that belongs unto the right ordering of your Christian Conversation; a matter, that presseth your consciences to the due observance and practice of it; and, if despised or neglected, will press your souls unto guilt, and sink them under wrath. And, certainly, they, who are so vain as to think the duties of this relation to be of no great concernment, must needs likewise be so impious as to impute trifling to the Holy Spirit of God, who hath, so frequently and with so much earnestness and instance, recommended them unto us. There is scarce any one Epistle, wherein the Apostles do not particularly insist on these things: and, certainly, what was worthy their care to write and teach, is worthy our care to learn and practise.

The duties, therefore, of married persons are either special or common: special, are those, which are the duties only of one party to the other; and that, either of the husband to the wife, or the wife to the husband: common, are those, which belong to both, and are by both to be mutually performed.

1. I shall first begin with *those Duties, which belong to a Husband towards his Wife.* And they are these:

(1) Conjugal Love.

Indeed, love is a beautiful ornament to all relations, but it is the foundation and principle of this. It is love, which ought at first to tie the marriage-knot: and it is love alone, that can afterwards make it easy. No other respect whatsoever can keep it from wringing and galling us. And, although want of love cannot dissolve the bond, yet it doth the joy and comfort of a married state. Now, of all the objects that are allowed us to love here on earth, a wife is the chiefest: yea, to be loved above parents, children, and friends, and the dearest of all other relations: Gen. ii. 24; *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife.* And, if you would know the full measure of this love, the Apostle hath prescribed it: Eph. v. 28; *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies:* and, ver. 33, *Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself:* you must be as careful and tender of their good, as of your own; and resent any injury done unto them, as much as if it were done unto yourselves. And, indeed, there is great reason for it: for marriage makes, of two, one mystical person: it doth but compensate our damage, and restore the rib to our side again. And, therefore, by marriage two are said to be made one flesh: Mark x. 8, *They twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.* And, therefore, all violence and outrage against a wife, into which the rude and boisterous fury of some brutish men doth too often break, is as unnatural, as if you should see a man beat, and wound, and gash himself. And, certainly, they are mad and distracted passions, which take revenge upon themselves: Eph. v. 29, *No man ever yet hated his own flesh;* that is, no man acting rationally and as becomes a man; *but loveth and cherisheth it.* So that we are to love our wives with the same tenderness and naturalness of affection, as our own beings; and they should be as dear to us, as ourselves. And, if you would have this high affection mounted a degree higher, see ver. 25, *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.* If a natural affection will not suffice, behold here a supernatural one; and the greatest instance of love, that ever was expressed or conceived, brought to be the rule and pattern of ours. Christ loved the Church, his Spouse, although there were many spots, blemishes, and imperfections in her: he loved her so, as to leave his Father, and cleave to his Wife: he loved her, better than himself and his own life; and shed his most precious blood for her; and, rather

than the wrath of God should fall upon his beloved Spouse, he thrusts himself between, and receives those heavy blows on his own person. So ought men also to love their wives: so infinitely, if it were possible: but, because it is not so, sincerely, And, therefore,

[1] They must love them, though they often bewray many Weaknesses and Imperfections; which they ought meekly to bear with, though they must not countenance nor encourage them. Love will cover a multitude of faults: and, so long as they are but faults and not crimes, we ought no more to divorce our affections than our persons from them. There is indeed a touchy love, which will cause great wrath for very small offences: but, usually, such kind of love turns into bitterness and exasperation: therefore, offences of this nature should prudently be passed by, only with a glancing reproof, or with a silence that shall be more instructive than noise and clamour. Here the Apostle exhorts husbands: Col. iii. 19, *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*

[2] We should so love them, as not to upbraid them with the Necessities or Incumbrances of a Married Life; but be content to abridge ourselves of our former freedom; and to forego our former privileges, either of plenty or pleasure, which we enjoyed in a single condition, without reproaching them with it. Many fools there are, who fancy nothing but joys and delights in a married life: but, when they enter into it, and find many unexpected troubles, and that they cannot live either at so much ease or with so much splendor as before, think to right themselves by perpetual brawls with their wives; imputing the cause to them, and charging on them all the burdens and inconveniences, under which they both labour, and of which commonly the woman hath the greater share. Now this is not to love as Christ loved the Church; who, for her sake, stripped himself of his glory, and voluntarily humbled himself, first to the dust, and then to the death, the cruel and cursed death of the cross.

[3] We ought so to love them, as to interpose and step in between them and Danger; and rather suffer it to fall upon ourselves, than upon them: for so Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it: redeeming it from the wrath of God, by his own undergoing it, and delivering it from death, by suffering death for it.

[4] We ought so to love them, as to endeavour to promote the spiritual good of their Souls; and, by good counsels and instructions insinuate into them the love of piety and holiness: that so, as Christ sanctifieth the Church, his spouse, we may also sanctify ours; and present them unto God, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

In these Four things, we are to love our wives even as Christ loved his Church; by bearing with and pardoning their weaknesses; by being willing to submit to many inconveniences for their sakes: by interposing ourselves between them and danger; and, lastly, by endeavouring to promote their spiritual good and benefit.

And, thus much, of the First duty, which is Love; on which I have insisted the longer, because it comprehends all other duties in it: for where there is this sincere and conjugal affection, although it may have different methods of expressing itself, according to the different tempers of men; yet it will certainly, in this, as in all other cases, command the whole train and retinue of other affections to wait upon it, and see that nothing be wanting to the good of the object on which it is fixed. I shall, therefore, be the briefer in the rest.

(2) Another duty of the Husband, is provident Care for his Wife.

He ought, saith the Apostle, *to nourish and cherish her, as Christ doth the Church.* He must, therefore, impart unto her, according to his rank and ability, whatsoever may be for her necessity or comfort: and not waste that in riot and excess among his lewd wicked companions, companions that the Devil hath given him, which ought to be for the support of her, whom God hath given him for his companion; and who, in the mean while, hath nothing to feed on but her sorrows, nothing to drink but her tears. See how deeply the Apostle hath stigmatized such wretches: 1 Tim. v. 8, *If any* man *provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

(3) Another duty that Husbands owe their Wives, is Protection from Dangers, when they are in jeopardy.

And, therefore, when the Amalekites had burnt Ziklag, and with the rest of the prey had taken David's wives; he pursues them with no more than six hundred men, though they were a great host, and rescues his wives from their captivity: 1 Sam. xxx. 18. And, indeed, the weakness and feebleness of that sex, being more helpless in dangers than ours and less able to relieve themselves, calls for this ready aid and succour from us; and he, who is so churlish as not to afford it, is so unnatural also as to suffer a part of himself to perish. A wife is compared, in Scripture, to *a fruitful vine:* now a vine is a weak tender plant, and requires support, and the husband should be as the houseside for her stay and support; and therefore woman was at first made of a rib taken from under the man's arm: the office of the arm is to repel and keep off injuries; which signifies unto us, that the husband ought to defend his wife from all wrong and injuries, that she may be exposed unto.

(4) Another duty is Instruction and Direction.

Therefore the husband is called her head; the seat and fountain of knowledge and wisdom: Eph. v. 23, *The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church.* And, therefore, as all direction and consolation is derived from Christ; so should the husband likewise derive down and communicate knowledge, and comfort, and guidance to the wife: called, therefore, her *Guide;* Prov. ii. 17. And St. Peter requires of husbands, that they should dwell with their wives *according to knowledge;* to be able to advise and inform them in all emergent cases, especially concerning God and their souls. Whence St. Paul enjoins wives, 1 Cor. xiv. 35, that, *if they will learn any thing,* they must *ask their husbands at home:* and, therefore, much more is it required of the husband, that he should have laid up a good stock of knowledge, and be able to teach them; lest such, as creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, ensnare their wives. For such is the subtlety of deceivers, following therein the method of the Old Serpent, that they first begin with the woman, and then make use of her to seduce the man: for heresy, as all other sins, does first inveigle the affections; and then, by them, corrupts the reason. And, therefore, the husband should be well grounded and principled with knowledge, that he may keep his wife from being led away by the crafty subtlety of those, who lie in wait to deceive; and who, by good words and fair speeches, affected phrases, and jingling expressions, that have nothing in them but sound and error, pervert the hearts of the simple. But if, as it sometimes happens, God hath endowed the wife with a greater measure of prudence, and solid and substantial knowledge, than the husband; it is then his part to hearken to her advice, and to yield not indeed to the authority of the counsellor, as she is bound to do, but to the authority of the counsel: and this she ought to tender him, with all respect and submission; not having power to enjoin what she knows to be best and fittest, but only with modesty propounding it, and with meekness persuading him to embrace it.

(5) Another duty of the Husband, is Tenderness and Mildness towards his Wife; not causelessly grieving her, either by speeches or actions.

That is a wretched family, where those, who are joined in the same yoke, spurn and kick at one another. If the wife be careful in performing her duty, there belongs to her a kind and loving acceptation of it, and praise and commendation for it: or, if she sometimes should fail, she ought not to be rebuked with bitterness; but with meekness, and in such a way as the reproof should show more

of sorrow than of anger. But perpetual brawlings and contentions, besides that they wholly embitter this state of life and eat out all the comfort of it, instead of preventing offences for the future, do usually provoke and exasperate to more; and are perhaps a greater fault in the husband, than that, which he exclaims at in his wife. Besides, it will certainly indispose them both, to the performance of those duties, which belong unto them in their general and particular callings. It will hinder their prayers: for how can they lift up their *hands without wrath*, as the Apostle commands, 1 Tim. ii. 8, when they burn in choler one against the other? How can they pray to God for blessings upon each other, when they have been cursing and reviling each other? And, as for the duties of their particular callings, do we not see, that, in those families where this baneful contention reigns, they are commonly neglected; and all runs to wreck and ruin, out of a kind of revenge, that one party thinks to take upon the other: the husband, out of discontent, will not provide, nor the wife manage; and so nothing is cared for, but only how they may quarrel and rail at each other: a misery, that many families fall into, through the indiscreet heats and fierceness of the man upon every trivial offence of the wife; though. perhaps, it was sometimes unthought of, and sometimes unavoidable,

(6) Another duty of the Husband, is to give due Respect and Honour unto his Wife.

1 Pet. iii. 7, Give *honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel;* for, being weak, she ought to be used with the more respect and gentleness. Think honourably of her, as the person whom God saw best and fittest for you in all the world; and be not tempted, so much as in a thought, to believe that any other could have been either so proper or so beneficial unto you. Speak honourably of her, not divulging any of her failings and imperfections, to her discredit; but giving her the due praise of those virtues and graces, that are in her: for he, that disgraceth his wife, disparageth himself; and every one will censure him as guilty of folly, either in choosing or in governing her. Treat her honourably: neither making thyself a servant to her humour, for that will dishonour thee; nor making her a slave to thine, for that is to dishonour her: but use her as thy bosom friend, thy endeared companion; and, in every thing but authority, equal to thyself.

(7) The last duty of a Husband, is prudent Maintaining and Managing of his Authority.

His authority over his wife is God's, who hath intrusted him with it: and our Saviour illustrates his own authority over the

Church, by the authority of a husband over his wife: Ephes. v. And, therefore, it is not basely to be betrayed, nor to be maintained with rigour and a tyrannical violence. But the right and most effectual way of keeping up this authority, is by prudence and gravity, by soberness and piety, and a staid, exemplary and strict life. This will cause a reverent esteem and veneration in the wife, and in the whole family; whereas a humoursome lightness at one time, and as humourous severity at another, will but expose us to contempt for the one, and hatred for the other. It is a hard matter for him to be reverenced by others, who doth not first reverence himself: for he, that will prostitute himself by foolish and ridiculous humours, or by vile and wicked actions, either injustice, or intemperance, or lying, &c.; it is impossible but that he must fall under the scorn of his nearest relations: and therefore, Nabal's churlishness and drunkenness made even wise Abigail to call him Fool: *Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.* But where there is an excellent mixture of prudence and piety together, the one to be a guide, and the other to be an example, these will make a man truly awful and reverend; and induce the wife and the whole family to esteem and to imitate him. And, thus much, for the Duties of the Husband towards the Wife.

2. Let us next consider *the Duties of the Wife towards the Husband:* and they are these, which follow:

(1) Subjection and Obedience.

And this is required from them, as absolutely and peremptorily, as unto Christ himself: Eph. v. 22, *Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.* And, again, ver. 24, *Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ; so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

And not only doth the Apostle give authority and command for it, but enforceth it by sundry reasons. As,

[1] The Woman was made out of the Man, and therefore ought to be subject unto him: 1 Cor. xi. 3, 8; *The head of the woman is the man. For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man.* She is *bone of* his *bone, and flesh of* his *flesh;* and therefore ought to pay him the homage of obedience and subjection for those materials of her being, which she first received of him.

[2] Because the Woman was made for Man, and therefore ought to be subject to him. So, in the next verse, *Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.* She owes her being to the man's necessities and convenience; and the great end of her creation, next to the glory of God, was that she might be

helpful and profitable to man: Gen. ii. 18; *It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him:* and, therefore, having received their beings for the sake of man, they ought to be subject unto him.

[3] Another reason, which the Apostle gives, is taken from the Priority of the Man's Creation: 1 Tim. ii. 12, 13, *I suffer not a woman .... to usurp authority over the man. For Adam was first formed;* and *then Eve:* and, therefore, in the same rank of creatures, it is but fit that he should be first in dignity, who was first in nature. And,

[4] Because, by the occasion of the Woman, sin entered into the world. So, ver, 14, *Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression:* and, therefore, it is but fit and just, that she, who made all mankind disobedient against God, should herself be made subject and obedient unto man. And this sentence we find inflicted upon her as a punishment for her transgression: Gen. iii. 16, *Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.* Not as though there would have been no subjection due from her to man, if sin had not entered into the world by her means; for the reasons before alleged do manifestly prove the contrary: but that now her subjection is a curse; and whereas before it would have been easy and pleasing unto her, now it is become burdensome and grievous: man being by sin made more humoursome, and harder to be pleased; and she being made less able and willing to do it, God justly and righteously punishing her, by imposing on her a work which she herself hath made irksome and difficult. And, let me add to these reasons of the Apostle,

[5] That the Man's Titles do imply Superority and Authority over the Wife. Such as Lord: 1 Pet. iii. 6; *Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.* He is likewise called the *Head* and *Guide* of his wife: 1 Cor. xi. 3. Prov. ii. 17.

[6] The Husband represents Christ, the Wife the Church; and that, in this very particular of superiority and subjection: and, therefore, *as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wife be to her own husband.*

And thus we see their subjection abundantly proved, both by natural and spiritual arguments.

And, in token of this subjection, the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. xi. 10, that *the woman* was *to have power* over *her head, because of the angels.* Which place, especially the latter clause of it, is diversely interpreted. But I think all agree in this, That this power, which they were to have on their heads, was a veil or covering; which, at other times, but most especially in the congregation, women ought

to wear on their heads; and which, in the primitive times, covered not only their heads, but all their face, as a guard to their modesty, and a screen to keep off loose and wanton eyes. And this veil is called *power;* to signify, that they were under the power and authority of their husbands. But the men were uncovered in their assemblies, as the Apostle tells us, ver. 4, to signify, that they had nothing over them; but were superior to all visible creatures, and subject only unto God. This Power, or Veil, women were to wear because of the angels: not, as Tertullian* did grossly conceive from that mistaken text, Gen. vi. 2, to hide their beauty from the sight and inspection of angels (for what veil could do that, or how can angels be affected with corporeal beauty?) but either, by Angels, are meant the Ministers of the Church, before whom they are to show modesty and bashfulness: or else, perhaps, the Celestial Angels, who are always present and attending in the assemblies and congregations of the faithful; and, therefore, women should not do anything unbecoming and unseemly before them: or, lastly, because the angels themselves do reverence Christ, who is their Head; and, in token of their subjection unto him, are said to veil and cover their faces: Isa. vi. 2, and therefore women also, in token of their subjection to their husbands, who are their heads, as Christ is of the Church, should likewise cover their heads and faces with a veil. So we find Gen. xxiv. 65, that when Rebekah saw Isaac coming towards her, *she took a veil and covered herself,* as a sign of her subjection to him.

And this subjection is recommended unto them, by the example of holy women, to whose practice they ought to conform their own. So, 1 Pet. iii. 5; *Holy women, who trusted in God, being in subjection unto their own husbands.* And St. Paul gives it in charge to Titus, to exhort wives that they *be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands:* Tit. ii. 5. And himself exhorts them to the same duty: Col. iii. 18, *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

These commands are so many and so express, that there is scarce any other duty, which the Scripture doth urge with so much instance and earnestness, with such pressing reasons and enforcing motives, as this of the wives' obedience. The duty is frequently expressed, *Submit yourselves;* and the manner of performing it, *Be subject, as to the Lord: submit, in the Lord.*

* *Propter angelos, scil. quos legimus à Deo & cælo excidisse, ob concupiscentiam fœminarum. Debet ergo adumbrari facies tam periculosa, quæ usque ad cælum scandala iaculata est.* Tertul. de. Virg. Vel. num. 7.

Which phrase carries in it three things: a Motive: a Direction: and a Limitation,

1st. A Motive to obedience. It is done *to the Lord.*

And though, through the froward and peevish humours of the husband, they may have no other encouragement to observe and obey him; yet, to the conscientious wife, this will be encouragement enough, that the Lord will accept and reward her obedience: her Heavenly Husband, Jesus Christ, will account it as a service done unto him. For marriage being a type of our mystical union unto Christ, he especially is concerned that the duties of that relation be performed so, as to bear some proportion to that spiritual mystery.

2dly. A Direction how to perform it. It must be *as* to the Lord. She must obey her husband, not only with a design of pleasing him, but the Lord Christ.

For, were it not that God commands it from them as part of their duty and obedience to him, it might sometimes seem very fit that humoursome and self-willed men should be crossed; and that those, who have no other reason but their will, should fail of that observance and obsequiousness, which they tyrannically expect. But then consider, it is not the husband only that commands, but the Lord; and the wife must eye his sovereign authority, through the authority of her husband: and then it will appear, that though there be no necessity in what is required, yet there is a necessity she should perform what is required.

3dly. The words impart likewise a Limitation of her obedience. The wife must submit and obey, but *in* the Lord, and *as* to the Lord: that is, only in lawful things, wherein, by her obedience to her husband, she may not offend against God.

And excepting this, in all other cases, the wife is absolutely bound to obey the will and commands of her husband, to the utmost of her power. It is true, he abuseth his authority, if he command things unnecessary and unfit; but yet, neither her unwillingness to perform them, nor her judging them inconvenient to be done, can excuse her, or exempt her from the obligation that lies upon her of a ready obedience: nothing can do this, but the unlawfulness or impossibility of what is enjoined. In all other things, although they be never so contrary to her humour and inclination, she is bound by the Law of God and Nature to obey; and to submit, if not her judgment, yet at least her practice to the will of her husband: whether she think it fit, or unfit to be done, so long as it is not unlawful, unless she can meekly persuade her hus-

band to revoke his command, she is obliged to perform it. Otherwise, when the Apostle commands wives to be subject to their husbands in every thing, it would signify no more than in every thing which they think fit: and this, certainly, is no greater a subjection, than every husband would readily yield to his wife; and falls infinitely short of the Apostle's intent, who requires this subjection of the wife to the husband in every thing, as the Church is subject unto Christ; which, certainly, is not in every thing she thinks fit; neither ought she to take upon her to judge or reject his laws, but to fulfil them.

This, therefore, is the First and most comprehensive Duty of a Wife, Subjection and Obedience.

(2) Another duty of the Wife towards her Husband is Respect and Reverence of his Person: Eph. v. 33, Let *the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

Now reverence consists in two things, Esteem and Fear.

[1] She ought to cherish a high Esteem of him; if not for his gifts and graces, yet at least for that relation which he stands to her, as her lord and her head, superior to her by God's appointment and ordinance. Yea, she must look upon him as that person whom God, out of all the numerous millions of mankind hath particularly chosen and selected for her; and one, whom he saw fittest and best to be her head and guide.

[2] Another part of reverence is Fear: not a servile slavish fear, for that is inconsistent with love; but an awful and a loving fear, which will show itself in two things.

1st. In her Care to Please him; endeavouring to conform her actions to his inclinations, so far forth as they are not repugnant to the supreme duty which she owes to God: 1 Cor. vii. 34, *She, that is married, careth for the things of this world, how she may please her husband:* and, therefore, she will endeavour how to comport herself in her speeches, and in her gestures, and in her whole demeanour so as may render her most grateful and most amiable to him.

2dly. In her Joy in Pleasing him, and Grief in Offending him. Indeed, a good wife should be like a mirror. A mirror, you know, hath no image of its own; but receives its stamp and image from the face, that looks into it: so should a good wife endeavour to frame her outward deportment and her inward affections, according to her husband; to rejoice when he rejoiceth, to be sad when he mourns, and to grieve when he is offended. This is that reverence, which wives owe to their husbands; thinking highly and honourably of them for their place sake, and endeavoring to avoid and shun

whatever may offend them: and, therefore, those who are cross and vexatious, and, either by clamours and contentious speeches, or by thwarting and peevish actions, grieve and sadden the hearts of their husbands; let them know, that they highly provoke the Lord, who hath commanded reverence and respect to be paid to the husband as his type, and as part of that reverence and respect which is due unto himself.

(3) Another duty of a Wife, is Helpfulness to her Husband.

She ought, indeed, to be a help to him in every thing. To his Soul: in furthering his graces; and wisely and opportunely admonishing him to his duty, at least by a holy and blameless conversation: so commending the Gospel of Christ unto her husband, that at length he may begin to esteem and reverence that piety, which hath so adorned and qualified his wife: and *what knowest thou, O wife, whether,* by such an exemplary life as this, *thou* mayst *save thy husband?* as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. vii. 16. To his Body: by cherishing and tendering of it. To his good Name: by endeavoring to augment and preserve it; reporting well of him; and silencing and convincing any scandalous rumours, that may be spread abroad concerning him. To his Estate (wherein, indeed, lies her chief helpfulness, and which she ought to make her constant and daily employment:) if she cannot bring in, and get anything to increase the stock, yet she ought prudently and frugally to manage what her husband entrusts her withal, and not to waste it vainly and profusely: for, let her know, that whatsoever is so spent or wasted is but stolen; and, if she shall alienate any thing from her husband contrary to his consent, either expressly declared, or else upon good grounds supposed to be tacitly granted and allowed, it is no better than theft: and, therefore, when we read that Abigail, without the consent of her husband, took a considerable present to bestow upon David to divert his ireful intentions; it may very well be supposed, that, if Nabal had known, as well as she, the danger wherein he stood, he would have been as forward to encourage her to do it, as she was ready and willing; and therefore here were good grounds to suppose a tacit and implicit consent unto the action. The husband is the true and only proprietor of all; and though the wife hath a right to all, yet it is only a right of use, and not of dominion: she ought not to dispose of his estate; or any part of it, contrary to his mind and consent. Her proper office is, providently and faithfully to manage the affairs of the family that are committed to her oversight and care: and, therefore, in the description of a good wife given us at large, Prov. xxxi., from verse 10, to the end,

w find the whole of it taken up in showing her industry and care in ordering the affairs of the family.

(4) Another duty of the Wife is Modesty; and that, both in Apparel and Behaviour.

[1] In Apparel: that it be according to her place and rank; not affecting gaudiness or strange fashions; nor yet affecting, on the contrary, a singularity of obsoleteness and outworn antiquity: for pride may be equally shown either way. The best temper is, for them not to wear garments to be taken notice of. The Apostle gives them this rule: 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4; Let not the woman's *adorning be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.* And so, St. Paul: 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10, *I will....that women adorn themselves* with *modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array: But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.* This indeed is the best ornament; that, which makes them lovely in the sight of God; and that, too, which makes them esteemed by all sober and serious persons. Indeed, I do not think that costly array is in either of these places absolutely forbidden: doubtless, gold and jewels may lawfully be worn, if we keep ourselves within our rank and quality; and fashion ourselves to those, who are most sober in that rank, rather than to those, who are most light and vain. But the prohibition is to be interpreted, either by the degree, i. e. be not excessive nor vain in your apparel; which happens when the habit exceeds either the quality or the ability of those that wear it: or else it is to be interpreted by a comparison; let not the adorning be the outward adorning of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; that is, study not so much how to set off yourselves in your garments, as how to adorn yourselves with a meek and quiet spirit, with sobriety, modesty, and good works, which is the richest and most beautiful robe you can wear.

[2] As she must be modest in her apparel, so in her Behaviour and Deportment. Her countenance, gesture, and speeches must be all fitted to show the inward calmness and serenity of her mind: and, therefore, imperious, clamorous, and turbulent women, who at every word spit passion and poison, are a torment and vexation to themselves, and more to their husbands. *The contentions of a wife,* saith the Wise Man, *are a continual dropping:* Prov. xix. 13. And it is such a dropping, as will at last eat and fret through his very heart, though it were made of stone.

These therefore are the Duties of the Wife.

3. There are likewise *Common Duties to be performed by both mutually.* I shall only name them to you.

Such are fervent prayers to God, both severally and together, that he would be pleased to pour down his blessings and his graces upon them, and give them wisdom to demean themselves towards each other aright; conjugal love; communion of themselves, of their estates, of their habitations; a mutual bearing one another's weaknesses, with prudent and pious endeavours to heal and remove them; the nurture and education of children; the government of their family committed to their charge, for whom they are to provide, not only what is requisite for their corporal good, but much more for their spiritual, inasmuch as their souls are much more worth than their bodies; and therefore they ought to observe constant family-duties, and make choice of honest and religious servants, and, so far as in them lies, keep out the infection of evil company from entering within their doors, as carefully as they would the plague. And, whilst they thus live and thus love, they have good reasons to believe, that, as they are joined in a near relation each to other, so they are both joined in a near relation to the Lord Jesus, who is the Husband of his Church, and all the Faithful in it; and, when death shall dissolve their marriage-union, and separate them one from the other, it is only to bring them to live for ever with that Husband, from whom they can never be separated nor divorced.

And, thus much, for the Mutual Duties of Husbands and Wives.

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iv. Let us, in the next place, proceed to consider the duties of another family-relation; and that is between MASTERS and their SERVANTS.

For these are also comprehended under this Commandment, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother,* since there is a confessed superiority of the one over the other; and, upon that account, as I not long since told you, servants have honoured their masters with the style and compellation of Father. Thus, 2 Kings v. 13, when those prudent servants sought to mitigate the rage of proud Naaman, who thought his greatness too much slighted by the Prophet, in that he would only cure and not compliment him, they reverently call him Father: his servants came near and spake unto him, and said, *My Father,* &c.

And, here, not to discourse of dominion and servitude, whether the original and foundation of either be in nature and institution, nor of the difference of servants by war, purchase, or compact; I shall only speak of what is more immediately pertinent to my sub-

ject, and what may be more instructive and profitable to you, viz. the mutual and reciprocal duties, that Masters and Servants ought to perform each to other.

The duties, that equally concern them both, consist in the general, either in the right choosing or in the right using of one another.

1. I shall begin with *the Servant's Duty*, and that

(1) As to the Choice of his Master.

He ought, where his choice is left him free, to choose a faithful master; such an one, as fears God, and will be willing to promote the spiritual good and salvation of his soul: with such, certainly, he shall best serve, who do themselves serve God; where he shall have nothing but reasonable and lawful commands to obey, and pious examples to imitate. Many poor ignorant souls have had cause for ever to bless God, that his providence hath cast them into such families, where they have received the first knowledge and the first savour of godliness. But, if the servant be, beforehand, knowing and religious, what comfort can it be to him to live, where there is a constant neglect of holy duties; nothing, but excess, and riot, and profaneness, and abusing of the Name of God, and scoffing at his service and servants? Certainly, necessity should hardly induce him, much less choice lead him, to be a servant in a family, where the Devil is the master of it. The Psalmist sorely complains, that he was forced to take up his abode among wicked and ungodly men: Ps. cxx. 5, *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*

And, as it cannot but be exceedingly burdensome and tedious to thee and cut thy soul to the very quick, to be at the command of those, who rebel against thy God; to hear his holy Name blasphemed; his ways, and worship, and people derided, which are dearer to thee than thy very life: so is it very dangerous and full of hazard. It is hard to keep zeal and the sparks of grace and divine love alive, when thou hast the greatest helps to it that can be administered: how wilt thou then preserve them alive, when thou hast so many quench-coals about thee; when the floods of ungodliness shall compass and surround thee about? Either thou must dissemble thy piety; and that is the ready way to lose it, for grace is like fire, stifle and keep it close, and it will certainly die: or else thou must put thyself upon the sore temptation of being mocked and scorned for it. Thou knowest not how far thou mayest forsake God and thy first ways, for compliance sake. It is the hardest thing in the world, to be religious alone; and to keep up zeal and affection for God, when all that we converse with are wicked and ungodly.

Vice is the most contagious plague that is: and it will be a very great wonder, if those, with whom thou familiarily conversest, with whom thou eatest and drinkest and sleepest, do not, at last, infect thee. We see holy Joseph, by living long in the Egyptian Court, had learned some of the court-fashions, and could readily swear by the life of Pharaoh.

Venture not thyself, therefore, into those families, where the governors are either corrupt and erroneous in their principles, or lewd and dissolute in their conversation: for it will be hard for thee to swim against the stream, both of example and authority; or, if thou shouldst be able to bear up against both, it will cost thee more pains and struggling to do it, than all the temporal advantages thou canst there reap will be worth to thee.

This is the First Duty that belongs to a Servant, viz., that he choose a pious and religious master.

(2) After thou hast made thy choice, and art entertained, consider how thou oughtest to Demean thyself towards thy Master.

And here, if, by what thou shalt hear, thy duty seem very hard unto thee; yet it is no harder than it hath pleased God to make it: yea, and possibly not so hard as thy master's; for he is bound to give an account for thee unto God, but so art not thou for him. Thy miscarriages shall be severely revenged upon him, if they have been through his default of needful instruction, or of care and discipline; but so shall not his upon thee. And, therefore, in this respect all inferiors have a mighty advantage to sweeten the meanness and lowness of their condition, that they shall not be punished for the sins of their superiors; but superiors may for the sins of their inferiors: yea, and sometimes for their due obedience too, when they command them things, though not unlawful, yet unfit; for that may be a sin in a superior to command, which is a duty for an inferior to obey, when commanded: and, certainly, in the end, his task will be found easiest, who is to obey; rather than his, who commands.

Now, here, [1] The chief and comprehensive duty of a Servant, is Obedience unto the Commands of his Master.

For this is absolutely enjoined them: Col. iii. 22; *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh.* And, again, Eph. vi. 5; *Servants, be obedient to them, that are your masters according to the flesh.* In all things, that are not dishonest and contrary to the laws of God, there obedience is required: yea, although in many things their commands should be impertinent, or too imperious and tyrannical; yet servants, in such cases, are no more exempted from obedience, than their masters shall be from punishment: for the

unreasonableness of their commands they shall give an account unto God, their master; and thou, for detracting thy obedience, both to them and him.

[2] Another duty is, a patient Suffering their Reproofs and Corrections.

Yea, and so patient are they to be, as not as much as to answer again: Tit. ii. 9, *Exhort servants.... to please* their masters *well in all things; not answering again.* So strictly hath religion tied them up to obedience, that they ought not to reply against a rebuke; nor to derogate so much from the authority of their masters, as to murmur at it: and, therefore, to use violence against them is so high a degree of disobedience, that it approacheth near to sacrilege.

Yea, and this quiet and silent submission is required also, not only where the servant hath given just cause for reproof and correction, but although he suffer from the groundless rage and passion of his master. See 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19, 20, *Servants, be subject to your* own *masters, with all fear: not only to the good and gentle; but also to the forward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man, for conscience toward God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.* See, here, with what pressingness the Apostle enjoins them this duty. And, indeed, a duty so hard, so contrary unto flesh and blood, had need to be pressed home upon your consciences. You ought to be patient, not only when you are justly reproved and corrected for your faults: but, if the distempered rage of a master should break forth without any reason, or contrary to all reason; if he should reprove and buffet you, not for your faults, but for your duty; you ought to take it patiently, and not to strike again: no, not so much as to answer again; that is, not to answer with taunts and invectives, but calmly, and at fit and convenient seasons, to present unto him the justice of your actions, and the reasons that moved you to them.

I must confess, that, of all things which belong unto the duty of servants, this is the most difficult: and there is nothing, that can sweeten and facilitate it, but only conscience of their duty, and the acceptation and reward which they shall find with God for it: and, therefore, they had need to pray for a great measure of self-denial, and mortification of those passions which will be apt to struggle in them upon this occasion; and, by an eye of faith, look up to God to support them, esteeming it a chastisement inflicted upon them by their Heavenly Master: and that, be their spirits never so high,

will enable them to undergo it without any more murmuring, than they would use against God himself, when he immediately afflicts them.

[3] Another duty of Servants is, a reverential Fear of their Masters. Mal. i. 6, *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a Father, where is my honour? And if I be a Master, where is my fear?* And the Apostle hath commanded servants to *be obedient to* their *masters with fear and trembling:* Eph. vi. 5. And, again, 1 Pet. ii. 18, *Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear.*

Which fear is to be expressed by them in their Speeches and Actions.

In their Speeches, by forbearing any clamours or irreverent muttering in their presence. Their words must be few and humble; giving them all those respectful titles, that belong justly to their place and quality. Yea, and they must not only speak fair to them whilst they are present, but speak well of them when absent: begetting in others as good an opinion of them as they may; concealing their infirmities; and what they cannot speak truly of them to their credit, therein to be silent.

They ought likewise to testify their reverence in their Actions: comporting themselves with all the expressions of modesty and respect before them; and readily doing, not only what their masters shall expressly command them, but what they judge will be pleasing and acceptable to them: and, therefore, we have that expression, Ps. cxxiii. 2, *The eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress:* intimating to us, that good servants will not only readily obey when they have a verbal and oral command, but will be ready to take the least sign, the least beck from their masters: and strive, not only to fulfil, but even to prevent their commands, by the readiness and respect of their obedience.

[4] Another duty of a Servant is, Diligence in his Master's Affairs.

He ought to set his mind to them, and employ his time in them. For he is not faithful, who is negligent; and he steals from his master, who doth not use his strength and spend his time in his service. Every slothful servant is a thief; and, so much advantage as he hinders his master of by his negligence and idleness, of so much he doth but rob him. And, therefore, in the Parable of the Talents, when the master takes an account of every man's improvements, he calls that servant, who had not used his talent, nor been industrious in his service, not only slothful, but wicked: *Thou wicked and slothful servant:* Matt. xxv. 26.

[2] Another duty is, Fidelity and Trust in what is committed to their charge: not defrauding their masters; nor purloining from them the least value; but serving them with all faithfulness and integrity,

So, Tit. ii. 9, 10, *Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters.... Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity.* And unto this appertains carefulness in preserving their master's estate; not wasting or consuming it, either by riotous living, or negligence. Doubtless, many men have sunk and decayed under the unfaithfulness or carelessness of their servants, either stealing from them, or prodigally wasting what was theirs. Let such know, that every farthing stands upon account in God's debt-book: unless they make amends to their masters, if ever Providence shall enable them to do it, they must make a punctual payment to Divine Justice, which is infinitely the more dreadful creditor.

[6] As trust in affairs, so likewise Truth in Speech is another duty of a Servant.

They ought to approve themselves such, that their masters may repose themselves upon their words. And, as servants are the hands and the eyes of their masters; so they ought to make no other report unto them, than what is as certain as though they had touched it and seen it themselves. We read of Gehazi, that when he was returned from taking a bribe of Naaman, he stood very demurely before his master, with a lie ready prepared in his mouth; *Whence comest thou, Gehazi? Thy servant,* saith he, *went no whither.* But this lie cost him a leprosy, that stuck incurable to him and to all his posterity after. I am loth to be uncharitable, but I much doubt, that, if the same judgment were inflicted upon every servant that comes to his master with a lying excuse, every family would be infected, and very few in this relation escape that loathsome contagion. Certainly, it is not only a cowardly, base, slavish fear, that induceth one to this vile sin of lying. And, what! wilt thou be more afraid to offend thy master by confessing a fault, than to offend thy God by committing another to conceal it? What else is this, but to heap sin upon sin, and to make a single transgression to become two thereby? A sin, the most odious unto God, who is truth itself: and, usually, most detestable to men, and with difficulty pardonable by them; for it imputes a great deal of folly and ignorance to them, as such who are so weak that they cannot find out the matter. And, therefore, the Psalmist saith, *He, that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight:* Ps. ci. 7.

[7] Another duty of Servants, and it is the last I shall mention, is to serve their masters *with Good Will,* and *in Singleness of* their *Hearts:* not grudgingly, as of constraint, for that is slavish; but readily and cheerfully, as unto the Lord: *not as men pleasers,* only *with eye-service,* being no longer diligent than their master's eye is

upon them, but careless and negligent as soon as his back is turned; *but, as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart:* as the Apostle commands and directs them; Eph. vi. 5, 6, 7.

Now to perform service unto their masters as unto God and Christ, imports these two things.

1st. A serious consideration, that God is concerned in every thing they do, as the object of it. So, Col. iii. 23, *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, to the Lord.* And, therefore, servants are commanded to have respect, not so much unto them, as unto God. This is the way to ennoble thy service, be it never so mean: it is God, whom thou servest in them; that God, whom the greatest princes and potentates of the earth ought to serve. And, be the employment what it will, yet the greatness and glory of that Master, to whom thou dost it, put an honour and dignity upon it.

2dly. To do service *as unto the Lord*, implies thy doing of it upon this very account, because God hath commanded it. Be the action what it will be, yet if you can truly say that you do it, not only because your master hath commanded it, but because God, his Master and yours, hath laid the authority of his command and injunction upon you to obey him, this prefers a man's service unto God, and makes it an action done truly unto him.

And this may be a great encouragement unto servants, (for indeed their condition generally wants encouragement) that, though their employments may be the meaner and inferior drudgeries of this life, and those possibly not very well accepted by their harsh and froward masters; yet, be their work never so painful and laborious, whilst they perform it out of conscience to God's command, it is accounted as done to him, and not to them: they are his servants, more than theirs; and he will kindly accept and bountifully reward them.

We have thus considered the Duties, which Servants owe unto their Masters.

Let us now proceed to *those Duties, which Masters, owe reciprocally to their Servants.*

And those consist, as I before noted, either in the right choosing, or in the right using of them.

(1) The Master's first duty is a prudent Care and Circumspection in the Choice of his Servants.

And, indeed, this is a matter of great moment; and that, whereon the happiness and comfort, or else the misery and trouble, of a family doth very much depend.

Now there are two qualifications in a servant, that ought chiefly to be regarded in the making choice of him.

The one is, ability to discharge his place; and manage those affairs which you commit to his care and trust.

The other is, conscientiousness and piety in doing faithful service, not to thee only, but to God, the common Master of you both.

And, indeed, this latter is of more importance and of greater concernment to thee, than the former. For, when thou entertainest a godly person, though possibly not so sufficient for thy employment as some others, it will be a commendation of thy charity, that thou maintainest one of God's servants in thy family. But when thou entertainest a lewd profane wretch, only because he is able to dispatch his work, thou maintainest one of the Devil's slaves, and takest into thy house a sworn servant to the mortallest enemy thou hast in the world: which is justly reproachable both with folly and impiety.

Yet how little is this usually regarded! I know it is the custom of too many, that, if they can light on those whom they think proper for their affairs, never enquire what their principles or what their practices be as to religion; whether Popish or Factious, whether for the Mass or the Meeting: but choose them as they would do beasts of burden, the most strong and able; and account it the only property of good servants, to be able to perform their office, and willing to drudge as much as they would have them.

But, let them know that they make a very unwise and a very sinful choice, For such servants will assuredly make much more work than they dispatch; and leave more filth in the house, than they cleanse out. Though they be never so able and fit for their employments: yet think not such an one fit for thee, who refuseth to serve that God. whom thou thyself art bound to serve: and believe it to be a design of the Devil to help thee to one, who shall do thy work but undo thy family. One vile and wicked servant is enough to corrupt a whole household: for, assure yourselves, they come there to do the Devil more service, than you; and their lewd examples and presumptions will seduce and draw others into the same excess with themselves.

For, to this, I impute the rise and growth of that general profaneness, that is too reigning in most families: especially in those whose quality or estates require a numerous attendance. They are commonly too careless what ruffian and debauched servants they entertain: and their children, which else might be the ornament and glory of the nation, conversing with these, learn from them those first rudiments of vice, which afterward their condition and wealth enable them to perfect into consummate villainy and deviliism. Here, they learnt their first taste of excess and intemperance:

here, they were taught the first syllables of oaths, and instructed how to lisp out curses and obscenity; and, according to their proficiency, were applauded by these impious wretches for their genteel docility and aptness. Such servants as these should be rooted out; not only as the pests of particular families, but their influence reaches farther, even to corrupt those who may hereafter have an influence on the state and commonwealth: for they serve only to give youth the first relishes of sloth, and pleasure, and vice, which, by woeful improvements, grow at last to be inveterate habits; and make them only a shame to their families, and a curse to the kingdom.

So it is proportionably, in all meaner families: where the servants be wicked, the children ordinarily will be more ruled by their examples and flatteries, than by their parents' authority and commands.

And, therefore, it highly concerns you to make a prudent choice at first: or if, therein, you have been mistaken, as soon as you can to rid your houses of those vermin and caterpillars, which else will destroy the verdant and budding hopes of your children; and to bring in those, who are sober, staid, and godly; who will make it their great care, first to serve God, and then you. Take the resolution of the Royal Psalmist for your pattern and direction: Ps. ci. 6, 7, *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he, that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He, that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house: he, that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight.* Certainly, those will be the best servants to us, who are faithful servants to God; or, if they should be less fit for thy occasions, yet they will sufficiently earn their wages, though they only pray for thee. It is said of Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 5, when he was brought into Potiphar's house to be his servant, *That the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had, in the house, and in the field.* Godly servants bring a blessing along with them to the families where they reside: and, having such a servant, thou hast a friend in court; one, that can do thee kind offices in heaven, through his interest at the Throne of Grace. And, therefore, as it is thy duty, so it is thy wisdom and thy concern, to make choice of such: these best know their duty: these will make most conscience of performing it: in their integrity and faithfulness, thy heart may repose; and they will entitle thee and thy family to those blessings, which attended them.

That is the First Duty, respecting the Choice of Servants.

(2) Another general duty of Masters is, rightly to Use them when they are chosen.

And that consists likewise in two things, Government and Provision.

[1] Their Government ought to be Prudent and Discreet; such, as may maintain their authority, and yet not be soured into tyranny.

And, therefore, it should be a master's care, to demean himself gravely and awfully before his servants: his very countenance and comportment should be enough to beget reverence in them. But when the master is vain and light, the servants will grow, first familiar, and then contemptuous.

Government consists in two things, Command and Correction. But that, which doth most of all tend to make both effectual, is good Example.

1st. First, therefore, a master ought wisely to Command and Enjoin his servants what they should do.

And, herein, is required a great deal of skill and prudence, For, though servants ought not to enquire into the reasons of all that their masters bid them do: yet, doubtless it is a very difficult matter for them to bring themselves to do that, which is apparently vain and ridiculous; and, by imposing such things upon them, the master will much hazard the loss or diminution of his authority: and, therefore, in laying his commands upon them, he ought to have regard both to the manner and matter of them.

(1st) As to the Manner.

He ought not to command with rigour, with ill language and revilings; as is the custom of too many, who, when they enjoin their servants anything, preface their commands with a reproach: which tends to nothing but to discourage them; to make them hate the employment, and him that setteth them about it; and, by this means, we make our servants to become our enemies.* The Apostle, therefore, hath given this caution: Eph. vi. 9; *Ye masters, do the same things* to your servants, *forbearing threatening.* Nor yet should they prostitute their authority by any submiss entreaties: for it is an evil which the earth itself cannot bear, when a servant reigneth and bears sway over his master; as the Wise Man observes, Prov. xxx. 22, but there should be such an equal mixture of mildness with gravity, and love with authority, that the servant should not only be compelled, but inclined by it unto obedience. Indeed, there is required much evenness of temper in him, that would make a good master: not to be hurried with violent and causeless passions, nor

* Macrob. Saturn. l. i. c. 11.

to be swayed by irrational humours; for nothing doth more detract from authority, than humoursomeness: because servants, not having any standing measure of what will please such a master, will at last grow careless of it; and despise the commands of him, who is as much a servant as they are servants; yea, a very slave to his passions and humours, than which there cannot be a baser and a viler slavery: and therefore those, who are servants to fickle and capricious masters, though they may seem very obsequious to them, yet cannot but secretly despise them: for power may, indeed, make their commands to be obeyed; but it is reason only, and gravity, that can make them venerable and reverend.

(2dly) As a Master ought to respect the manner how he commands, so likewise the Matter what he commands.

And, in this, take these Three Rules.

[1st.] He ought to command nothing, but what is Lawful to be performed.

For both he and his servant have a Supreme Lord and Master in the highest heavens, whom they both ought to fear and obey. His service is no farther due to thee, than as it is consistent with the service of God; and, when thou commandest anything contrary thereunto, thou art not a master, but a tempter. It is true, he is bound in conscience to observe thee; yet it is only in those things, wherein the Law of God hath left his conscience free: and, therefore, when the Great and Universal Lord hath laid a prohibition upon him, his obedience is superseded; and thy commands do only bind thyself to guilt, not him to observance. He is bound to work for thee; but not to lie, nor to steal, nor to cheat for thee: and, if thou art so wicked as to enjoin him any such thing, it is no uncivil answer, to say to thee, as the Apostle did, Acts v. 29, *We ought to obey God rather than man.*

[2dly.] A Master's Commands must be not only lawful, but, Possible.

To Command things impossible, is the height of folly. And, therefore, when Abraham commanded his servant to procure a wife for his son, he prudently answers, What if she will not come? upon which supposition, his master acquits him from the oath of God, that was betwixt them: Gen. xxiv. 8, *If the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this oath.* To command things impossible to be effected, will but detract from the master's authority, and lessen his esteem, and cause the servant to think his own discretion to be a better guide for his actions than his master's: yea, although the thing be not simply impossible in itself, but only

to the servant, considering either his inability or employments; or if it be hugely inconvenient, or prejudicial, or unseasonable; the master ought not, in conscience or prudence, to exact it. For, as to command things unlawful, is impiety, and things impossible, folly; so, to require things unreasonable and prejudicial, is mere tyranny: and, as such, it is recorded in Pharoah and his task-masters; who, to weary and wear out the Israelites, exacted the whole tale of bricks, but would not allow straw to make them.

[3dly.] A Master's commands ought not to be Vain and Impertinent; but he should have some swaying reason, though perhaps not always fit to be communicated to the servant why he commands such things from him, reason sufficient to satisfy his own judgment and his own conscience.

These Three Rules ought to be observed by Masters: they ought to command nothing, that is unlawful to be done; nothing, but what is possible; nothing, but what is profitable and useful.

And this is the First Part of a Master's Government, viz., prudently commanding of his servants.

2dly. It is the Master's duty to Correct those servants that are stubborn and disobedient.

The Wise Man tells us, Prov. xxix. 19, There is *a servant,* who *will not be corrected by words: for, although he understand, he will not answer.*

Yet, here, prudence must be the measure of what discipline is fit for them; according to their age, disposition, and the nature of their offence. A reproof will work more effectually with some, than stripes: and those, who have ingenuous spirits, though in a servile condition, will either be discouraged or exasperated by a too-rigorous usage. And God hath expressly interposed his will, in this particular: Lev. xxv. 43, *Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God.*

Indeed, no correction is to be inflicted on them, out of passion and revenge: but either, for reformation and amendment, that they may be the more wary for the future; or, for example's sake, to terrify others from the same or the like offences. Even a heathen could say, *Nemo sapiens punit, quia peccatum est; sed ne peccetur:* * "No wise man doth punish, because the offence is already committed," for then it comes unseasonably and too late; "but that it might not be committed again."

But, still, be sure that the corrections be not immoderate and too severe: neither exceeding the proportion of the fault, for that is

* Plato apud Lactant. de Ira Dei. c. 18.

cruelty; nor unbeseeming thee to inflict, or the age and quality of thy servant to suffer, for that will be reproachful to both.

Generally, reproof is the best discipline. But if they be such contumacious fools as not to be amended with that, although it be lawful and in some cases necessary to use a sharper method towards them; yet the best and most prudent course, and that which will tend most to thy quiet and credit, is to discharge them.

Now, to move you to mercy and lenity towards them, consider,

(1st) That you yourselves have a Master, the Great and Glorious God.

This the Apostle urgeth: Eph. vi. 9, *Masters* .... forbear *threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven.* Think with yourselves how often you provoke him; and yet he forbears you, although you are infinitely more inferior to him, than any servant can be unto you: and this will calm your passions; and cause you, if not altogether to waive, yet at least to allay and mitigate, the rigour and severity of your chastisements.

(2dly) Consider, that they are equal with you, in respect of God.

It is true, they are your servants; but both you and they are fellow-servants to the Great Lord and Master. And if thou, in a rage, shouldst take thy fellow-servant by the throat and imperiously abuse him, fear, lest thy Lord may require it; and vindicate his wrongs, in the punishment of thy tyranny; *There is no respect of persons with* him; *but he, that hath done wrong, shall receive for the wrong that he hath done.* And what art thou, O vile worm, that thou shouldst domineer over thy fellow; who is moulded of as good earth, and hath as precious and immortal a soul in him, as thyself? For,

(3dly) Consider, that thou art equal, likewise, in nature: only Divine Providence hath made the difference.

Whence then such a supercilious disdain of servants, *Quasi non iisdem tibi et constent et alantur elementis, eundemque spiritum carpant,* (as Macrobius;) "as if they did not consist of the same materials, nor draw the same breath with thyself?" They are servants; but yet they are men: they are servants; yea, rather, they are thy fellow-servants.* And it is in the power of the same Providence, who hath subjected them to thee, to change the scene; to exalt them, and bring thee into bondage. Why then shouldst thou despise them? whereas thou knowest not how soon thou mayest be brought under a more miserable servitude. They are servants, out of necessity; when, perhaps, their masters are voluntary slaves. Some are slaves to their lusts; others, to covetousness; others, to ambition;

* *Servi sunt, imò, homines servi sunt, imò, conservi. Id.*

and all, to hope, all to fear. And there is no servitude so justly contemptible, as that, which is voluntary and wilful.

(4thly) Consider, again, that he, who is a servant to men, may be the Lord's free-man; whereas he, that is free among men, may be a slave to his lusts, and by them to the Devil: and, therefore, we ought neither to think despicably of servants, nor to use them severely; but to treat them with love, as our fellow-creatures, our fellow-servants, yea, and fellow-heirs of the same inheritance of life and glory.

And, thus much, concerning the Master's Duty in Government.

[2] Another general, wherein his duty consists, is Provision; and that, both for their Temporal and Spiritual Good; for the welfare, both of their bodies and their souls.

1st. As for their Temporal Provision, he is bound to supply them with things necessary for them, according to the tenor of the agreement and compact made between them: Col. iv. 1; *Masters, give unto your servants that, which is just and equal.* He ought to provide for them food and raiment; or, else, in lieu of any of these, faithfully to pay them their agreed wages. Lev. xix. 13, *The wages of him, that is hired, shall not abide all night with thee, until the morning.* And, again, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15, *Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant, that is poor and needy.... At his day, thou shalt give him his hire: neither shall the sun go down upon it.... lest he cry against thee unto the Lord and it be sin unto thee.* This oppression of servants, in withholding from them the covenanted reward of their labour, is a crying and provoking sin. So the Apostle: James v. 4, *The hire of the labourers, which have reaped down* the *fields*, (so likewise of those, who have done any other work and service for you) *which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth.*

2dly. As the Master is to make temporal provision for their bodies, so much more is he to provide for their Spiritual Welfare, and the good of their souls; inasmuch as their souls are incomparably to be preferred before their bodies.

Every master is to be a priest and a prophet within his own family, as well as a king. He is to instruct them in the will and laws of God; to inform their ignorance, resolve their doubts, excite and quicken them to the service of God; to rectify their errors and mistakes; to pray with them and for them; to direct them in the way, that leads to heaven and happiness; and, above all, to walk before them in it by his holy and pious example.

But how few are there, that do conscientiously perform this duty!

Do not the most think it enough, if they provide necessaries and conveniencies for the body, the dull, outward, and earthly part of man? and, indeed, it were enough, if they had only beasts to look after.

But, remember, thy servants, and those who belong to thy charge, have precious and immortal souls; capable of eternal glory and happiness, but liable to eternal misery and torments: and God hath intrusted thee with these souls of theirs, and will require them at thy hands. What a heavy and tremendous doom will pass upon thee, when God shall demand at thy hands the souls of thy servants, or of thy children, which have perished through thy default! Will it be enough then to plead, "Lord, I fed and clothed them, and was careful of their health and welfare?" Yea, indeed, if their bodies only were committed to thy care, this were enough: but see, there they stand condemned, and ready for eternal flames, for the ignorance which thou oughtest to have informed, for the profaneness which thou oughtest to have chastised and hindered, for those neglects of holy duties in the which thou oughtest to have gone before them; and, therefore, though they shall die and perish in their sins, yet their blood will God require at thy hands, whose carelessness or evil example hath hardened them in wickedness, and led them on securely to destruction.

Let me, therefore, warn you, who are Masters and Heads of Families, that, as you tender the souls of those who are under your charge, yea, as you tender your own souls, which are deeply engaged and concerned in theirs; so, that you would use all diligence and industry, in promoting their spiritual good, that you may at the Last Day present them with joy before the tribunal of God: "Lo, here I am, and the children and servants that thou hast given me." That you may with joy and triumph present them before the Throne of Justice then, be frequent in presenting them before the Throne of Grace now. Let not a day pass, without its stated hours of prayer in your family. Instruct those, that are ignorant: reduce those, that are erroneous: admonish and rebuke, with all authority, those, that are faulty: discard those, that are contumacious and incorrigible: let not a scoffing Ishmael, a scorner and derider of piety and holiness, remain within your doors: and, especially be careful that both you and your family do strictly observe and sanctify the Lord's Day; for therein consists a great part of the life and strength of religion, and this day usually gives a seasoning to all the days of the week after. Prepare your families, by private duties, for public: let none of them stay at home from the ordinances, but upon

great and urgent necessity: suffer them not to wander, some to one pasture, and some to another; but, where the ordinances of God are duly dispensed, and whither thou thyself art called, thither do thou lead thine, that, as they altogether receive their bodily food in thy house, so they may altogether receive their spiritual food in the house of God: take an account of their profiting by what they hear: be as careful to see thy family well employed in the service of God upon that day, as to see them employed in thine own service and affairs the other days of the week: and, therefore, be not long nor unnecessarily from them; for God hath made thee his overseer; and, if his work go not forward in private family duties, especially on the Lord's Day, thou canst never expect a blessing upon what they do for thee.

And, thus much concerning the Mutual Duties of Masters and Servants.

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v. The next sort of relative duties, that I shall treat of, is, that of PASTORS and their FLOCKS, Ministers and their People. For, between them also, is such a relation of superiority and inferiority, as brings them under the direction of this Commandment.

We do not arrogate too much to ourselves, nor take too much upon us, when we affirm that we are superior to the people; and have an authority over them, in things spiritual and appertaining unto God. And although, through the vices and foul miscarriages of those who are dignified with this high honour, and partly through the meanness of their outward state and condition; to which may be added, likewise, the meanness and abjectedness of their spirits, as a consequent upon the former, basely prostituting themselves, and forfeiting the respect that is due to them, by their sordid crouching for a morsel of bread at the lower end of a gentleman's table: though by these, I say, not only their persons, but their office be sunk into the lowest scorn and contempt; yet I cannot but, with the Apostle, magnify mine office, which is truly excellent and venerable: and it is the great sin of the people to despise this calling; although the follies and indiscretions of ministers themselves may not only occasion, but invite them to do it.

Here I shall plainly set down the reciprocal duties, which they ought mutually to perform each to other.

1. The *Duties of Ministers*, either respect their Call to that office, or their Management and Discharge of it.

(1) The great duty, that respects their Call, is, to look to it, that they be rightly called; that they do not temerariously thrust them-

selves into so sacred a function, unless they be duly set apart thereunto.

For, as the Priests under the Law were *taken from among men*, and *ordained for men in things pertaining to God*, to *offer gifts and sacrifices*, as the Apostle speaks, Heb. v. 1, so, likewise, the Ministers of the Gospel are to be duly sanctified and set apart for this high employment, to stand before the Lord, and to minister in things that appertain unto his worship: and it is an intolerable presumption, for any to intrude themselves into this lot, without being selected thereunto by that order, which God himself hath appointed and left unto his Church. *For no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he, that is called of God;* as the Apostle subjoins, ver. 4. And, therefore, God complains of those prophets, whom he had *not sent*, and *yet they ran:* and to whom he had *not spoken*, and *yet they prophesied:* Jer. xxiii. 21. Audacious-undertaking men, it seems they were: like some of late days, who thought their forwardness alone a sufficient consecration; and the seal of whose commission bears only the stamp of their own impudence.

Now to the due constitution of a minister there is requisite a Twofold Call.

[1] He must have an Inward Call; which consists both in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and also in the inclination of his will to use them for God's glory in this holy ministration.

Of these Gifts, with which he must be endowed, some are absolutely necessary to capacitate him for the office, others are only conducible to make his ministration in it the more effectual.

That, which is absolutely necessary, is a competent knowledge in the truths of the Gospel; without which, the great end of the ministry cannot be attained, which is to teach and instruct the people. It is, indeed, their duty to strive after an eminency in this knowledge: for they are the lights of the world; and should be able to diffuse abroad their beams, that they might enlighten those that are ignorant, and sit in darkness. But, yet, there is no stated measure nor standard for their knowledge: for we find that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Minister and Teacher of the World, sent forth his disciples to preach, when yet they were very ignorant of many important truths of the Gospel. Eminent knowledge is, therefore, necessary for their duty; but competent knowledge is necessary for their office.

That, which is highly conducible to the effectualness of their ministry, is sanctifying grace, and a holy life and conversation. Not that they are not true ministers without this: for we find a Judas

sent forth, with the same authority and commission as the rest of the disciples. Yea, and the Apostles, who had Christ himself for their Master and Instructor, yet are by him sent to attend upon the ministry of the Scribes and Pharisees, who, though they were very wicked and ungodly hypocrites, yet because they sat in Moses' seat, i. e. because they had a rightful authority to teach the people, therefore he commands his own scholars to hear and obey them: *Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do:* Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. It is not, therefore, personal grace, that gives authority to our ministry; but yet it may and doth contribute much efficacy unto it. God may feed his people, as he did Elijah, by a raven; and make a cold breath kindle the sparks of grace in the hearts of others, and blow it up into a flame. But yet it is far more comfortable and profitable to the people, to sit under a minister who shall go before them in example, as well as in doctrine; who not only prescribes them rules of holiness, but is himself an example to those rules. Such an one, who speaks from the heart, is most likely to speak unto it; and, having himself experienced the ways of holiness, can more savourily recommend them to the acceptation of his flock. And, certainly, he will be more likely to speed in his errand, when he shall persuade them to nothing but what he hath found the goodness and sweetness of in himself. All others are but like those Mercurial Statues, which, in old times, were set up in cross-ways, with their hands extended to point out the right road to passengers, but themselves never walked in them. These, indeed, may be serviceable to direct their people. But a minister should not only be a director, but a leader: he should not only point out the way, but walk before his flock in it. And it is commonly observed, that they are the labours of such, that God most usually owns and crowns with success.

[2] As he must have an inward call in the gifts of the Spirit of God; so, likewise, he must have an Outward Call by a solemn separation of him to this work, through Imposition of Hands.

This, indeed, gives him the ministerial power; and invests him with authority to dispense the ordinances of Jesus Christ, as an officer and minister of the Gospel. And this authority St. Paul calls a gift, 1 Tim. iv. 14, *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.* This gift here spoken of, I take to be nothing else but the ministerial office conferred upon him by Ordination, according to those predictions and prophecies, which were before given of him by some divinely inspired men; who foretold, that he was by God designed

for the work of the ministry, and should glorify God by a careful discharge of it; of which we read chap. i. ver. 18. Yea, this office is by our Saviour himself called the Holy Ghost: and Ordination, how harsh soever the phrase may seem to be, is a giving of the Holy Ghost; not indeed either in the gifts or graces of it, (which were afterwards plentifully bestowed upon them on the Day of Pentecost) but only authority to exercise the ministerial function. Consult John xx. 22, 23, *When he had said this, he breathed on them,* and said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost:* which Holy Ghost I take to be nothing else, but their solemn mission to the ministry.*

And this, though perhaps it may seem a strange interpretation of the place, I cannot but judge to be the true sense and import of it, upon these two considerations:

1st. That the Holy Ghost was in no other respect at all, at that time, given to them. They neither received any extraordinary degree of grace, nor any extraordinary gifts of grace, more than they were before endowed with. Yea, it is plainly expressed, that as yet the Holy Ghost was not given them in his extraordinary gifts, but they were commanded to wait for the promise of the Father at Jerusalem; and the first accomplishment of that promise was on the Day of Pentecost, when the Spirit descended upon them in the form of fiery cloven tongues. Here, then, being a receiving of the Holy Ghost, and that not in the extraordinary gifts or graces of it; what can remain, but that our Saviour, by breathing on them, gave them the Holy Ghost, that is, mission and authority to preach the Gospel, and to dispense his ordinances to the Church?

2dly. The words following interpret these in this sense. *Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.* Now these words seem to me a clear exposition of the former, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost,* i. e. Receive ye authority to remit and retain sins; which is one great part of the ministerial power, to declare pardon to the penitent, and wrath to the incorrigible and obstinate.

This, though it may seem a strange, yet to me it seems the only true and consonant exposition of this place. But I shall not now further vindicate it.

Now, as our Saviour used this sign of breathing upon his disciples when he ordained them; so the Apostles afterwards instituted and used another sign, viz., Laying on of Hands; of which there is frequent mention in Scripture, and which was introduced into the Christian Church from the pattern of the Jewish Church. Thus we

* Hooker's Eccles. Polit. 1. v. § 77.

read, Acts ix. 17, that Paul is ordained by the Imposition of the Hands of Ananias: he put his hands on him, and said, *The Lord Jesus....hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost;* i. e. that he might be endowed with ministerial gifts, and invested with the ministerial authority. And, again (which I wish heartily our Dissenting Brethren, who so much decry re-ordination, would but a little more maturely weigh and consider) he the second time receives mission and ordination with Barnabas: Acts xiii. 2, 3, *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.* Yea, this Imposition of Hands was so inseparable and attendant upon Ordination, that sometimes it is used alone to signify it. So, 1 Tim. v. 22, *Lay hands suddenly on no man:* i. e. Ordain no man rashly, and without due advice.

Now, since this External Call is so expressly and frequently mentioned, and the manner of it so particularly described, how daringly presumptuous are they, who, without regarding those methods which the Holy Ghost hath prescribed, yea, despising and contemning them as obsolete and outworn formalities, rush into the ministry, and pretend an Inward Call of gifts and graces: which yet, in very many of them, are no other than most of the people might as well pretend unto, if they had but the like impudence; and so we should have more ministers than people, more shepherds than sheep! But let their gifts and their graces be ever so eminent and admirable, they ought not to take this honour to themselves, until they are set apart by the Church; and, as well empowered to preach by an outward mission, as enabled to do it by their gifts and qualifications.

And, thus much, for the first thing which a Minister ought to regard, which is his Call to that office.

(2) When we are assured, that our call is right and according to the will of God, there are then many other duties incumbent upon us in the due Exercise of our calling. As,

[1] We ought to be good Examples to the flock.

This St. Paul most expressly enjoins Timothy: 1 Tim. iv. 12, *Be thou an example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

Indeed it is very sad, to consider how the unsuitable conversation of ministers doth quite enervate all the force and strength of their doctrine and exhortations. For, let them speak with the tongues of angels, and preach as holily and powerfully as if the Holy Ghost did immediately inspire them: yet, if their lives be loose and their

conversation contradictory to their doctrine, the people will be ready to conclude, that so much strictness is not necessary, that they only urge it as a matter of high and nice perfection in religion, and that certainly they know a nearer way to heaven than through so many severities which they press upon the people; and that, therefore, they will take the same course, and run the same venture that their ministers do.

And, indeed, how is it likely, that such a ministry should be effectual to bring others to holiness, when the minister himself declares to all the world by his actions, that he looks upon it as unnecessary? What hold can his admonitions and reproofs take upon the consciences of such men? Certainly, his own guilt must needs rise up in his throat, and choke his reproofs. For conscientiousness of the same miscarriages will retort whatsoever we can say against others, more strongly upon ourselves; and suggest to us that it is but base hypocrisy, to blame that which we ourselves practise. With what face canst thou press others to repent and reform? what arguments canst thou use to prevail with them, who, by continuing in the same sin, dost thyself judge those arguments to be of no force.

Indeed, it were a temper to be wished and prayed for, that we could only respect how righteous the reproof is, and not how righteous the person who gives it; and be content to have our motes plucked out though it be by such as have beams in their own eyes: that we could learn that hard lesson, which our Saviour gives his disciples, to do as they say, but not to do after their works; for, indeed, there is no more reason to reject sound admonition, because it comes from an unsound heart, than there is to stop our ears against good counsel, because it is perhaps delivered by a stinking breath.

But, yet, so it usually fares, that, when ministers of defiled and loose lives shall yet preach up holiness and strictness to their people, and, as they ought, reprove them sharply for their sins; they will be apt to think, "What! is he in earnest? And doth he not see that he himself is as bad or worse? With what face can he thunder out woe, and wrath, and hell against my sins, which yet are no more mine than his own? Doth he think to fright me with denouncing threats and curses, when he himself, who stands as fair a mark for them as I, slights and contemns them? Or doth he envy me my sins, and would engross them all unto himself?" And thus, with such carnal reasonings drawn from the evil examples and wicked lives of ministers, they sit hardened under their preaching; and account all they say, but as a lesson they must repeat, and a

le they must tell to get their living by. Certainly, such shall perish in their iniquities; but the blood of their souls God will require at your hands.

But, when a minister walks conscientiously and exemplarily before his flock, his doctrine gains a mighty advantage to work upon them, by his life. This is building up the Church of Christ with both hands; showing them both the equity and the easiness of that holiness, which he persuades them to, by his own practice. When he reproves, his reproofs break in upon the consciences of his hearers with conviction and authority; and, if they do not reform, yet at least they daunt and terrify them, and make them self-accused and self condemned. "Here is one, that reproves me for sin, who believes it to be as evil as he represents it, by his own eschewing it. Here is one, that tells of wrath if I repent not, who doubtlesss believes it to be as terrible as he declares it, by his own carefulness to escape it." Certainly, preaching never comes with such power and energy into the conscience, as when the minister preacheth as well by his works as by his word: and, to induce the people to it, is first obedient himself to the truths which he teacheth them. Men are easier led by examples, than by precepts; for, though precepts, are the more exact, yet examples are the more easy way of teaching: and he is a perfect workman, who joineth both together; neither teaching what he will not do, nor doing what he dares not teach; and therefore it is observed of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Teacher of his Church, that he *began both to do and teach:* Acts i. 1.

Now ministers must be exemplary, both in themselves, and in their families.

In Themselves, they *must be blameless, as the stewards of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no strikers, not given to filthy lucre: lovers of hospitality, lovers of good men, sober, just, holy temperate;* as the Apostle sums up their duties, Tit. i. 7, 8. These are the things, which will give them a good report among those, which are without; and will recommend the doctrines and truths which they teach, to the acceptation and love of their very enemies, and the enemies of their holy profession.

They must likewise be exemplary in their Families: a Minister must rule *well his own house; having his children in subjection, with all gravity:* 1 Tim. iii. 4.

And, because there are so many who are ready maliciously to asperse us, we must, by a serious and circumspect conversation, cut off all occasions from slanderous tongues; that they, who watch for our halting, may be ashamed when they can find nothing to reproach us with, save in the matter of our God.

But if any such there be, who speak like angels, but live like devils; who, when they are in the pulpit, it is pity they should ever come out, and when they are out, it is a great pity they should ever come into it again; who are heavenly lights in it, but hellish firebrands out of it: would to God they would consider how they destroy the very end of their calling; and, instead of converting souls, do but harden them in their sins; making men abhor the offerings and ordinances of the Lord; putting arguments in their mouths to justify their continuance in their wickedness, or else prejudices in their hearts; causing them to depart and separate from holy institutions, because dispensed by profane and scandalous ministers. Let them pretend never so highly to uniformity and obedience; yet, certainly, these are the men, who have made all our Separatists, that now sadly rend our Church in pieces: for, when the sheep see a wolf set over them instead of a shepherd, no wonder if they run from him and scatter into other pastures. It is in vain for them to tell people, that they ought to be obedient to the laws of the Church, their Mother, when those, that tell them so, are not obedient to the laws of God, their Father.

And oh, that they would but consider, not only the damage which they do to the Church, of which too many of them seem zealous propugners; but the heavy woe and wrath, which they bring upon their own souls. Every sermon they study, they do but draw up a bill of indictment against themselves; and, every time they preach, they do but pronounce the sentence of their own damnation: and woe unto such pastors, when they, whom Christ hath set over his sheep, shall themselves be found at the Last Day standing among the goats!

[2] Another great duty of Ministers is, a diligent and conscientious Employing of their Gifts and Talents.

They must be both able and willing to teach. They themselves must be well-grounded in the knowledge and doctrine of Christ: *The priest's lips should* preserve *knowledge, and* men *should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts:* Mal. ii. 7. And, therefore, the Apostle rejects a novice; a raw, ignorant, and unexperienced person: for, *if the blind lead the blind, both will* be in danger of falling together *into the ditch.* And God himself tells such ignorant and foolish teachers, Hosea iv. 6, *Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I also will reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me; seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*

And, as they must be able to teach, so they must be diligent in

teaching. *A necessity is laid upon* them: and *woe unto* them, *if* they *preach not the Gospel;* as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. ix. 16. They ought to be instant in season, and out of season: 2 Tim. iv. 2, *Preach the word: be instant, in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine.* Not as the Minister must be continually in the exercise of preaching, but he ought to preach *in season*, i. e. in the ordinary and stated times for it; and *out of season*, i. e. on extraordinary occasions, when the necessity or utility of the Church shall require it. His doctrine ought to be,

1st. Sound: such, as cannot be condemned: Tit. ii. 1; *Speak thou the things, which become sound doctrine.* It must have its authority, either from the express words of Scripture, or the analogy of faith rationally deduced from Scripture; for he, that preacheth false doctrine inconsistent with these, doth but mingle poison with his people's meat.

2dly. It must be profitable: not setting before them alien and unintelligible notions; or such thin airy speculations, as can scarce consist with sense, much less with divinity: for this is to give them wind instead of food. 2 Tim. ii. 14, Charge *them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.* And, Tit. iii. 8, *These things I will that thou affirm constantly; that they, which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

3dly. Their preaching must be plain, and suited to the capacity of their hearers, as much as can be without disgusting any: for he, that shall only disgorge and tumble out a heap of bombastic theatrical words, at which the people only stare, and gape, and wonder, preacheth to them in an unknown tongue, although he speak English: and this is but to give them stones instead of bread.

4thly. Their preaching must be grave and solid, not slovenly and too much neglected; for that will but beget a nauseating in the hearers: nor yet too nicely and sprucely drest; for that will be apt to divert the attention from the matter to the phrase. Their Sermons ought to have a comely and matron-like, not a gayish and meretricious attire. The truths they preach must be delivered in such words, as may adorn, but not hide nor bury them: such, as may rather recommend the doctrine to the consciences, than the art and rhetoric of the preacher to the ears and fancies of the hearers.

5thly. They ought to preach powerfully and with authority: 1 Tim. iv. 11, *These things command and teach.* We come to the people in the name of God, and are his ambassadors; and therefore ought to deliver his message boldly, being sent to the people by the

King of kings and Lord of lords: and those, who mince his errand as if they were afraid to speak that, which God hath given them in commission, shall, at their return unto him, receive the reward of treacherous and unfaithful messengers.

There are very many other duties, which cannot, without too much length, be particularly insisted on.

As Hospitality, according to the measure of their estates: 1 Tim. iii. 2. They must be *given to hospitality*. And, Tit. i. 8, They must be *lovers of hospitality*. And, therefore, they ought to be liberally and plentifully endowed, that they may make their table a snare in a good sense; and may get some to follow and observe them, though it be but for the loaves. And here it will be a good point of their wisdom, if they can handsomely make use of such opportunities, as we find our Saviour did after he had miraculously fed the multitude, to break unto them the Bread of Life, and with their bodily nourishment to feed their souls.

Then, Gravity, in their discourse, and in all their converse. A minister should neither speak nor do anything, that is unseemly. Intemperate mirth, clamorous talk, scurrilous jestings, but especially the least syllable of an oath although it be never so much varied and disguised, in a minister's mouth, as it is wicked, so it is utterly misbecoming the dignity of his profession, and renders him mean and contemptible.

Again. A pious and assiduous care in Visiting the Sick: who are certainly most capable of good advice and counsel then, although perhaps they have all their life-time before despised and refused it. You may possibly do more good by the sick bed, than in the pulpit: for death is a terrible and thundering preacher; and he must needs be a most forlorn and obdurate wretch, who will not listen to your admonitions, when the hopes of a long life, which made him formerly reject them, have forsaken him.

Again. Diligence in Catechising and Instructing the Younger in the principles of faith and religion. Root them well at first, and they will continue stable ever after. This will save yourselves and your successors much labour afterwards: for, if once you can insinuate into their minds piety and verity they will grow up to farther degrees of perfection in the ordinary course of your ministry; and be your comfort and rejoicing here, and your crown and glory hereafter.

There are many other duties necessary to the right discharge of the ministerial function: but these already mentioned shall suffice; and all others may be reduced to some of these.

I shall, therefore, conclude this with my earnest request, that you would ever seriously meditate upon that charge, which God gives the Prophet, and in him all ministers: Ezek. iii. 17, 18, 19, *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked* of his evil way, *to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity: but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness... he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.*

2. *The People's Duty towards their Minister* is especially twofold.

(1) Obedience: in being persuaded by his good advice and admonitions.

We have this most expressly commanded: Heb. xiii. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you:* that is, not only civil magistrates, and your rulers in state affairs, but ministers also; for so it is added, *for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief.* And they are called *the elders, that rule well*: 1 Tim. v. 17.

I know that this obedience to ministers is a duty so utterly forgotten in the practice of most men, that I doubt of some prejudice in them against these places of Scripture, by which it is so plainly enjoined. Alas, that ever Christ and his Apostle should invest us with such authority, which when we assume, we are looked upon by the people as almost as ridiculous for it, as if we had only a reed in our hands, and a crown of shame rather than of dignity put upon our heads; and are accounted of, rather as insolent usurpers upon their liberty, than as officers empowered by God himself! Sirs, we take to ourselves no power over you, but what God hath by his patent and charter given us; and, when we propound to you the will of God revealed in his word, or in cases not so clearly determined therein do give our judgment as those who have found mercy to be accounted faithful, we do and may challenge your obedience to it, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we find, that, in those particular cases, wherein the Apostle had no express revelation from Christ; yet he prescribes to the Corinthians what he judges fit for them to do, and by that direction obliged their practice: not, indeed, simply and absolutely; yet so, that, in such circumstances as the Apostle supposeth, they had sinned if they had done otherwise than he directed them. We desire not to lord it over God's inheritance, by any burdensome imposition of things, either

unlawful, or in themselves unfit. But, when we require from you those things, which God himself hath commanded; or, if not expressly commanded, yet which are, in the judgment of those to whom you owe obedience, thought convenient and lawful to be done; I know not how you can excuse yourselves from disobedience against God, if, in these cases, you be not obedient unto us. And, if you call this usurpation, and a taking too much upon us, you do but speak the language of Korah and his accomplices: Num. xvi. 3; and shake not so much ours, as God's title and authority over you, who hath given us this power and commission.

(2) Another duty of the People is to honour their Ministers as their Spiritual Fathers.

Yea, the Apostle speaks of a *double honour*, that is due to them: 1 Tim. v. 17, *Let the elders, that rule well, be accounted worthy of double honour.* All must have that honour given them, which is due to their function; but those, who rule the flock well, καλως, *i. e.* not barely commendably, but excellently, must have this honour doubled to them: and those, who not only thus rule, but excel others in teaching them likewise, must have this double honour doubled upon them; especially they, that labour in the word and doctrine.

This Double Honour is commonly taken, for the Honour of Reverence, and the Honour of Maintenance: and, perhaps, this place doth most especially mean this latter, when it speaks of double honour. For this word τιμη often signifies reward and maintenance; and is, in that sense, used in this very chapter, ver. 3, Χηρας τιμα, τας οντως χηρας, Honour widows, *i. e. Relieve widows, that are widows indeed.*

And here, by the way, we may see how groundless their assertion is, who, from this place, established an order new and unknown to the Church of God till of late, of Lay-Ruling Elders. For, if this text gives them any such authority, it gives them the double honour too; and so, consequently, by divine right they may challenge maintenance from the people, as well as the ministers themselves: nay, and if they rule well, a large and plentiful maintenance, double as much as may suffice others of their own rank and order; which honour when they shall challenge to themselves, as doubtless they may upon as good proof and evidence as the authority they pretend to, certainly their pastors will find greater reason to annihilate these creatures of their fancy and polite accommodation, than ever they had to forge them. But, to return. We owe them,

[1] The honour of Reverence.

We ought to honour and esteem them, for their office and their

work sake. So, expressly, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13, *We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you . . . . and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake.* And, again. Phil. ii. 29, *Receive him therefore, in the Lord, with all gladness; and hold such in reputation.* And certainly they, who cast any contempt upon ministers, either by injurious actions or reviling speeches (as it is grown a common custom, to make them a by-word, a very scoff, and song of the drunkards) do not so much despise them, as Christ who sent them; *He, that despiseth you, despiseth me,* saith our Saviour: Luke x. 16, And God will not leave this sin unpunished; yea, he speaks of it as almost an unpardonable crime: 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, *They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of* God was *against his people,* and *there was no remedy.*

[2] They owe unto them the honour of Maintenance.

So, Gal. vi. 6; *Let him, that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things.* And there is good reason for it: for, *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?* saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 11. What you give them is not a matter of bounty, and mere voluntary benevolence; and the minister, who so accounts or receives it, undervalues his authority, and wrongs his right: but it is your duty, and his due. He must have a competent and liberal maintenance, not stinted to the bare size of necessity; but it should be affluent: such, as may enable him to relieve the necessities of others, to provide comfortably for his own family, and to use hospitality in his house. This is his due; and he owes you no more thanks for tendering it, than you do him for receiving it. Not here to dispute the divine right of the tenth part, (which yet was not all that was due to the ministers under the Law, for they had a considerable accession by offerings and sacrifices:) I think it certain, that the encouragement of ministers under the Gospel should equal, if not exceed theirs, inasmuch as our labour is far greater, and our ministry more excellent, than theirs. But they, who think it fit to keep ministers poor and dependant, may well be suspected to do it in favour of their own vices: for how shall he dare to reprove them, who is afraid of losing part of his stipend, or the benefit of his patron's trencher? But whilst the gentleman in black must sit below the salt, and after dinner converse with the better sort of serving-men, there is no danger that he should be so audacious as to find faults; or, if he should, no great heed will be taken to what so despicable a thing as he can say.

Thus much, for the Duties of Ministers and People.

vi. The first head of Mutual Duties between SUPERIORS and INFERIORS, that I shall insist on, is, between those who differ in the gifts of Divine Bounty.

And these may be considered, either as the gifts of Special Grace, or of Common Providence. Of which briefly.

1. God doth endow some with an excellent measure of *Sanctifying Grace;* and is pleased to show the world, by a few rare and choice instances, how wonderfully he can sublime our corrupted nature, and how near he can exalt human frailty to an angelical perfection.

This, indeed, is the most excellent of all his gifts; and that, which we ought most earnestly to covet and desire: for, although other gifts, as knowledge, wisdom, power, &c., do, in some imperfect manner, assimilate us unto God; yet sanctity and holiness doth far transcend all these: both because it stamps upon us the resemblance of the Divine Nature, in that attribute which is its greatest glory (whence God assumes it to his style, that he is *glorious in holiness*); and, likewise, because God hath highly honoured it, and given it the dignity and prerogative to be the only means of bringing us to the complete and eternal fruition of our felicity.

(1) Now those, whom God hath thus blessed with an eminent degree of this his best gift, ought,

[1] To beware that they do not secretly despise their weaker brethren in their hearts; nor, with a censorious austerity, reject those, whom God hath rece ved.

It is often seen, that fellow-servants are more inexorable each to other, than their common Lord and Master; and that those errors and infirmities, which are rather the slips of incogitancy, than the products of a resolved will, can hardly obtain pardon among men, though God hath forgiven and forgotten them. Now this ariseth from a spiritual pride, which makes us envious towards those who excel us, and scornful towards those who fall short: for when men grow conceited of their own excellencies and attainments, they will be ready to condemn other men's duties as formal hypocrisy, and their sins as total apostasy: they will mistake the smoking flax for a reeking dunghill; and be forward imperiously to cast them out of God's family, though themselves were but lately received into it out of mere charity.

Certainly, this is a spirit (though it too much prevails in this broken and shattered age, wherein every one thinks so much the better of himself, by how much the worse he thinks of others; yet this I say is a spirit) utterly misbecoming the sweetness and mildness of the Gospel, which teacheth us to be meek and gentle, forbearing one

another, and forgiving one another. It would better become thee, O Christian, not to observe other men's falls, but to look to thine own standing: *Thou standest by faith, be not high minded, but fear:* Rom. xi. 20. It is the worst way, that so excellent a thing as divine grace can be perverted, when it makes thee proud and censorious.

For my part, I should much more confide in the security of an humble soul, that creeps along to heaven, though with a slow, yet an even pace, than in the ecstatic zeal and fervour of such, who perhaps far outstrip others, but also contemn them. For the one is still pressing forward, and regards with admiration those who excel: but the other is often looking back with disdain upon those, who are slower than himself; and, whilst he minds not so much his way as the advances he hath made, offers many advantages to the Devil to trip him up and give him many a sore and shameful fall.

And, therefore, O Christian, the more eminent thy graces are, the more need hast thou to pray and strive for humility. The tallest cedars had need have the deepest roots, otherwise the storms and winds will easily overturn them: so, truly, the higher any grow, the more they spread and flourish, being like the cedars of God, beautiful in their leaves and plentiful in their sap, the more need have they to be deeply rooted in humanity; or else, believe it, the wind and tempest of temptations, to which they stand more exposed than others, will not only sorely shake them, but utterly overturn them: when those, whom they shall despise as mean shrubs, shall stand secure; and, with a tender pity, weep over their fall.

[2] Another duty of such as are eminent in grace, is, to improve it to the benefit and advantage of others.

God hath given thee a larger portion, that thou shouldst be helpful to thy brethren. The stock of grace which he hath offered thee, is not only that thou thyself shouldst live well upon it, but it was intended for the relief and comfort of the whole family.

Hath God endowed thee with a clear and distinct knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel? Know, that this lamp was lighted up in thee, that thou shouldst give light unto others; that thou shouldst diffuse and scatter abroad its rays round about thee; to inform the ignorant, guide the doubting, confirm the wavering, resolve the scrupulous, reduce the erroneous, and convince the malicious opposers of the truth. This is not the Minister's duty only, though more eminently and especially his; but it is the duty of every private Christian, whom God hath blessed with a large measure of true knowledge more than others, still keeping within his due bounds and limits.

Or, hath the Holy Spirit kindled in thy breast a flame of divine affection? And is it not to this end, that thou shouldst breath warmth into the languishing desires of others; and, by holy conferences and spiritual discourses, illustrating the beauty of holiness, the excellency of true piety in itself, and the rewards which it brings after it, apply thy heavenly fire unto their chill and freezing hearts, until thou hast enkindled them too, and set them on a flame, that so both together might burn with vigorous love towards God and his Christ?

Or, hath God exercised thee with grievous trials and violent temptations? Wherefore is it, but that thou shouldst the better know how to succour those, that are tempted; and, by thine own experiences, counsel and comfort those, who are ready to sink under their load, which not only the weight, but the unusualness makes the more intolerable? For the greatest accent and emphasis, that such do usually put upon their miseries, is, that never any before were so severely afflicted, never any before were so violently assaulted. Let them know, that no temptation hath befallen them, but what is common unto men; and that thou thyself hast come triumphantly from under the like. Expound to them the depths and methods of Satan: unravel his wiles and subtleties: stretch out the entangled folds of that old and crooked serpent: for, therefore hath God comforted you in all your tribulations, that you might be able to comfort them who are troubled, with the same comforts by which yourselves have been comforted of God; as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. i. 4.

Or, if thou art not so fit either for instruction or counsel; yet, at least, let thy graces be beneficial unto others, by a holy and exemplary conversation. If thy graces cannot shine through thy gifts: yet, at least, let them shine through thy life, that others, seeing thy good works, may give glory to thy Heavenly Father. And, therefore, never complain that thou canst not honour God in so noble a way, as others; that thou canst not speak nor plead for him, as others do. If thou livest to him, thou pleadest for him: for certainly, a holy life is a much better commendation of holiness, than all the elaborate encomiums of art and rhetoric.

These are the duties of those, that excel in Grace.

(2) As for others, their duty is, [1] Highly to love and esteem those, whose graces are more eminent and conspicuous.

God is the comprehensive and ultimate object of our love and veneration; and, therefore, the nearer any creature approacheth to the similitude of God, the more ought we to esteem and prize it. Now God is not more lively represented in anything, than in the holiness of his saints. This is the most perfect portraiture and image

of him, who hath styled himself *the Holy One of Israel.* They are begotten of God, made partakers of the Divine Nature, and conformed unto his image: and, therefore, as we would adore this glorious attribute of God in its infinite original, so we ought to esteem and venerate it in those happy souls, to whom God hath communicated some rays and strictures of it. *Every one, that loveth him that begat, loveth him also, that is begotten of him,* saith the Apostle, 1 John v. 1; because of the likeness he bears to his heavenly Father: and the more express this resemblance is, the more intense and the more endearing should our affections be. We ought to associate with them; to make them our bosom friends, our confidants, and our companions: our delight should be in the saints, and in the excellent ones of the earth, as David professeth his to have been, Psal. xvi. 3.

[2] Another duty is, imitation of their holy examples; and following of them, wherein they follow the Lord Christ.

If thou seest others far outstrip thee, mend thy pace, endeavour to overtake them, tread in the same steps, and do thy very utmost to keep even with them: and envy not their graces, but be sure to emulate them.

Indeed, some there are, who, that they might not seem to be behind the best, prove hindrances and pull-backs to them, lest the forwardness of their zeal and piety should be a reproach to their own sloth: like truants at school, who, lest their fellows should get too much before them, do what they can to entice them from their books. But this is a most wicked envy, and the root of it is pride and laziness.

But a holy emulation never repines at, nor hinders the proficiency of others: it rather would, by all means, promote it; but only it will put us upon endeavours to be as forward as any. It will not be a curb to them, but a spur to us. And such an emulation as this, every true Christian should highly cherish. For the shame of being outstript, is as great an incentive, as any that can be given unto virtue. Christians are like a company of men running in a race: every one should strive, and strain every nerve and sinew to be the first at the goal; the first that should lay hold on the prize and reward.

And, here, be sure you set your pattern right. Take not the most noisy and airy Christians, who glory in talk and censures. Take not one, who hath an affectation of being religious after a new mode and fashion. Take not one, who seeks to raise a fame for piety only, by decrying or condemning this or that form of profes-

sion; and who, if there were no differences among us, would lose very much of his reputation for sanctity: for these are only torrents, that run with a violent stream; but they are shallow, and we know not how soon they may grow dry, and deceive the hopes of those who come to refresh themselves at them. But propound those to yourselves for examples, who are of fixed principles and sober practices; who are grave and solid, and, in all the duties that belong to a Christian-Conversation, labour to do them substantially rather than ostentatiously; that live within God and themselves; that have deep thoughts and solid expressions of them, and whose actions are suitable and correspondent to both. Such an one is the Christian indeed; and such, for some such there are, I recommend to you for your imitation. And yet there is no man, that walks so uprightly, but that sometimes he steps awry. And, therefore, be not led by a blind and implicit adherence to them, but continually eye the rule; and, wherein soever they forsake that, be they Apostles, yea, or if it were possible, even Angels themselves, therein forsake them.

And, thus much, for the Mutual Duties of Superiors and Inferiors, in respect of Grace.

2. Let us next consider them, in respect of *the gifts of God's Common Bounty*, which he promiscuously distributes both to the good and to the bad. I shall but briefly mention them unto you.

God's gifts of Providence may respect either their Persons or else their Outward Estate.

Those, which respect the Person, or either gifts of the Mind or of the Body.

(1) Those, who excel in Gifts of the Mind, in knowledge, and wisdom, and parts, a profound judgment, or a winning elocution, &c., they ought to improve these to the good and advantage of others: not as Ahithophel did his politic counsel, or Tertullus his flattering oratory, to oppress right and equity; but to guide and advise, for the benefit of mankind, and the glory of God.

For these gifts, though they are not sanctifying, yet may be very serviceable to the Church. Hiram, though he were a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, yet provided many excellent materials for the building of the Temple. So God doth, many times, embellish those who are strangers to him, with many admirable ornaments of understanding and learning; and makes use of the materials, which they have prepared and laid in, for the edification of his Church. And, as Noah employed many to build his ark, who were themselves overwhelmed in the deluge; so God, many times, employs such as these to build his ark the Church, who yet may at least be swept away with the deluge of his wrath, and drowned in perdition.

These, though they should possess such gifts without any sanctifying and saving grace, yet are they very considerable men; and our duty is to esteem and reverence them, to love their excellencies, and to encourage their labours, to praise God for them, and pray for an increase of their gifts. How much more then, when their natural and acquired endowments are conjoined with sanctifying grace; and the love of the truth doth as much possess their hearts, as the knowledge of it doth their heads! It is a sordid baseness, to detract from any man's worth, or extenuate his abilities, by some slanderous buts and exceptions; which is the disingenuous practice of many, who think all that added to their own praise, which they thus nibble away from another man's.

(2) Another superiority, which God hath granted some over others, is that of Old Age, which is of itself reverend and awful; and we ought to give that due respect unto it, which both Nature and the Law of God requires: Lev. xix. 32, *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God.* God hath put a signal honour upon it, by styling himself the *Ancient of Days:* Dan. vii. 9; and he threatens it as a great judgment upon a people, Isa. iii. 5, that the children shall behave themselves proudly against the ancients. We read how severely a scorn, cast upon an aged prophet, was revenged on those children, which mocked his baldness. A reverend awe before them is not only a point of manners, but part of a moral and express duty; and therefore it is said of Elihu, Job xxxii. 4, that he *waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he:* and, ver. 6, he saith, *I am young, and ye are very old: wherefore I was afraid and durst not shew you mine opinion.*

And, if such respect and reverence be due unto them from others, they ought chiefly to reverence themselves; and, by grave, and prudent, and holy actions, to put a crown of glory upon their own gray heads. They ought not to be vain and light in their converse; nor children of a hundred years old; nor, by the folly and wickedness of their lives, expose themselves to that contempt, which will certainly be cast upon them, where age is not accompanied with gravity and prudence. And therefore we find it, Prov. xvi. 31, *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness:* otherwise, instead of being a glory, it is but a double shame and reproach.

(3) There is another sort of the gifts of common Providence, wherein some excel others, and that is, Riches and Honour.

These the Scripture calls Fathers. Nabal, although he were a fool and a churl; yet David, in his messages to him, doth implicitly call him Father: 1 Sam. xxv. 8, *Give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David*

Their duty is to be humble towards their inferiors, knowing that they are only external goods, and those the least considerable of all the stores of God's blessings, that make them to differ from others: and to communicate to the relief of others' necessities, that they may be rich in good works, and make themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness that when they fail they may be received into everlasting habitations; for he, that is rich only in hoarding and keeping up his store, is no better to be accounted of, than the base earth, which locks up more treasures in its bowels, than they can in their chests.

And their inferiors' duty, is, to pay them all due respects, according to what God hath bestowed upon them; to acknowledge the riches of God, in making them rich; and to endeavour to promote, so far as in them lies, the spiritual good of their souls, that they may not be rich here and undone eternally. For a rich man may be more universally instrumental, either of good or evil, than others can: and, therefore, to win such an one to the faith, or to preserve him stable in it, is a most charitable work; not only to their souls in particular, but to the Church of Christ, the affairs of which may be much advanced by such a man's wealth and interest.

And, so much, for this last relation between Inferiors and Superiors, in the Gifts of God's especial Grace or common Bounty.

Thus I have, at last, gone through the mutual duties of many relations; some natural, some civil, some ecclesiastical, and some economical: I know not with what acceptation or success.

Possibly, some may think these things too mean and trivial to be so long insisted on. But, let me tell such, that Relative Duties, as they are the most difficult of all others to perform, so they are the best trials of true Christianity and the power of Godliness. He, that endeavours not to walk closely with God in these, let his notions and profession be never so lofty and sublime, it will be no uncharitableness at all to judge, that all his pomp is but a mere form of godliness, and a hypocritical ostentation.

Let me exhort you, therefore, in the fear of God, that ye would be much in pondering these things. There needs no great labour, to understand them, nor to find out mysteries and concealed depths in them. It is true, they are plain; but they are of daily use: and it is but requisite, that we should not be long understanding what we are continually to practise.

Let me subjoin but one General Rule to this, and have done with it: and that is, That, IN ALL THESE MUTUAL DUTIES, IT IS NO EX-

CUSE, FOR THE ONE PARTY TO FAIL OF THE MOST CONSCIENTIOUS AND CAREFUL PERFORMANCE OF WHAT BELONGS TO HIM, BECAUSE THE OTHER DOTH SO. For, certainly, another man's sin cannot excuse mine: and God hath bound us in duty, not only to one another, but all of us unto himself. And, therefore, although they may break their obligations and covenants, yet that doth not take off our obligation. Should the father be careless of and cruel to his child; yet this doth not at all exempt him from paying duty and obedience unto his father. Should a master be tyrannical over his servant; yet the servant's duty remains still stated and unaltered, to reverence, fear, and obey him. Should a minister be careless of the flock committed to his charge; yet his people are still bound to give him respect and honour, in regard of his office Should a magistrate tyrannize over his subjects; yet still they are to own him, and obey his commands in all lawful things. For mal-administration of any office or any authority, cannot countenance and excuse want of duty in inferiors. Still we are as carefully to perform what God hath required, as if they were the best parents, or magistrates, or masters in the world: and, if there be any wrong done or defect on their part, we must leave it to him, to reward our conscientious obedience, and to punish their wilful offences. And so, likewise. it is incumbent upon superiors to perform their duties faithfully and conscientiously toward their inferiors, be they never so perverse, ungrateful, or rebellious; for their faults cannot excuse our neglects.

And, thus much, for this large and comprehensive Precept, *Honour thy Futher and thy Mother.*

II. To the precept is added the PROMISE, as a motive and encouragement to obedience: *That thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* And this promise God's faithfulness stands engaged to fulfil, to all, that are dutiful and obedient.

Here we may observe, that, whereas the free and genuine administration of the Gospel promiseth eternal life and the joys and glories of heaven to believers, the old Law runs generally upon earthly and temporal blessings; and, among them, insists frequently upon length of days and a happy and prosperous life, as the chiefest blessing and highest expectation of human nature: which must not be so understood, as if the promises of the Law were only for these beggarly and terrene concernments; but because this procedure was more suitable to the whole system of that pædagogy, wherein God thought fit to discipline them by types, and to lead them unto the

sun by shadows. Therefore, as he allayed his own spiritual worship with the mixture of very many external rites and pompous observances; so he propounded likewise their eternal rewards unto them, by temporal and earthly promises: and, by both, attempered their religion unto their estate of infancy; bringing it down, as much as possible, to the verdict of sense; reserving the manly and heroic duties of believing his word without a pawn, to the more grown ages of the Church.

But, howsoever, although these promises made to the Jews were thus typical; yet these figures were not altogether so figurative, as not to be properly understood and fulfilled. Though heaven were typified by Canaan; yet God's veracity would have suffered, if he had brought them to heaven, the True Land of Promise, and not given them their inheritance in the earthly Canaan. So, likewise, that God might be true to his promise, it is not enough that he rewards the obedient with eternal life: but his faithfulness stands obliged to prolong their temporal life, to such a duration, as may be fit at least to make a type of the everlasting rest.

Neither doth the more spiritual dispensation of the Gospel look upon this blessing of long life, as a thing below its cognizance; but propounds it as a promise of moment, though it be now divested of its typical use, and stands for no more than itself signifies. And, therefore, we find that the Apostle puts a value upon this Fifth Commandment on this very reason, that it is *the first with promise:* Eph. vi. 2, 3. And St. Peter, at large, transcribes that passage of Ps. xxxiv, *What man is he that desireth* to live, *and loveth many days?* Let him *depart from evil, and do good, &c.* And St. Paul tells us, that *godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of* this life, *and of that which is to come.* And what is there, that can concern this life, more than life itself? God's faithfulness is, therefore, obliged by promise, to lengthen out a holy and obedient life.

Nor will it be very hard to vindicate his faithfulness, in the performance of this promise. Although God suffer many to grow old in their sins, whose youth began their course of wickedness with rebellion against their parents, and who continue, to their decrepid days, their impieties and rebellions against God: when as, early towardliness and piety are generally looked upon as mortal symptoms; and God seems especially to shorten their days, to whom he here promiseth a long life. For, since this present life is nothing else but a tendency and preparative unto eternity: neither it nor anything in it can be called good, but only as it relates to our eternal state. And, therefore, all promises of earthly blessings must neces-

sarily imply this condition, that they shall be literally fulfilled unto us, if they may promote our eternal happiness: otherwise, they would not be promises, but threatenings; and that, which we apprehend a blessing, would indeed prove no other to us than a snare and curse. We may boldly challenge long life, when all the circumstances of it will tend to our everlasting welfare. But God, who knows how frail and yielding the best of us are, and in the series of his Divine Providence seeth what prevailing temptations we shall be exposed unto, doth oftentimes, in mercy, abridge this promise; and takes us from the world, lest the world should take us from him; and deals with us, as princes deal with duellists, they make them prisoners, that they might preserve them: so God, that he might preserve his people from their great enemy, commits them to safe custody of the grave. And, if this be to be unfaithful, certainly his faithfulness would be nothing else but an art to circumvent and undo us; should he, only to keep that inviolate, perform those promises, which would be to our hurt and detriment. Nor, indeed, can any man, whom God hath blessed with a right judgment and due esteem of things, be willing to compound for the continuance of this present life, with the hazard or diminution of his future happiness.

Thus much, for the explication of the Fifth Commandment.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not Kill.

The Commandments of the Second Table do all of them immediately respect that duty which we owe unto men: whom we may consider, either as under some peculiar differences, or else in their common nature.

We have already spoken concerning the duties that belong unto them under the first acception; as they are differenced into Superiors and Inferiors.

There are other duties, which appertain universally unto all, under what difference soever they may be considered; whether they be Superiors or Inferiors, or Equals among themselves: and these are contained in the Five following Precepts: all which concern our neighbour, either in his Person, or in his Exterior Gifts of Wealth or Good Name.

His Person is to be considered, either naturally or mystically.

Naturally, as he is this individual man: and so, the Sixth Commandment provides for his security: THOU SHALT NOT KILL.

Mystically, as he is in the state of Marriage; which, of two, makes

up one mystical person: and so care is taken for him in the Seventh. THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

If we consider him in his External Gifts, so his Estate and Substance is safeguarded by the Eighth Commandment: THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

His Reputation and Good Name, by the Ninth: THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR.

And, as a strong fence set about him, and also about the other laws, that neither of them be violated, God hath not only prohibited the outward acts of gross and flagitious crimes, but the inward, and lurking motions unto evil, in our Thoughts and Affections; and this, in the Tenth Commandment: THOU SHALT NOT COVET.

I shall begin with the First of these; which takes care for the Security and Indemnity of our Persons: THOU SHALT NOT KILL.

I. And this forbids that barbarous and inhuman sin of MURDER, that first-born of the Devil, who was *a murderer from the beginning;* the first branded crime that we read of: wherein natural corruption, contracted by the Fall, vented its rancour and virulence; the sin of Cain, that great instance of perdition, *who slew his brother* Abel .... *because his brother's works were righteous, and his own evil.*

Neither doth this Precept confine itself only to forbid the actual sin of murder; but all degrees and all causes of it: as hatred, and rash anger, revenge, and slanders, and false accusations, and whatsoever may prejudice the safety of our neighbour, or tempt us to see him perish, when it is in our power to rescue and relieve him.

Some old heretics * extended the sense of this prohibition, THOU SHALT NOT KILL, even unto brute creatures themselves; holding it unlawful to slay any of them for the use and service of our life. Possibly, indeed, unmercifulness even towards them, and a cruel tormenting of them, not to satisfy our occasions and necessities, but our unreasonable passions, may be reducible as a sin against this Commandment; for all acts of cruelty are so: but, simply to kill them for our necessity, cannot. God, the Universal Lord both of them and us, hath granted us this prerogative in our charter, to have the power of life and death over them: Gen. ix. 3, *Every moving thing, that liveth, shall be meat for you.* And, doubtless, we may put them to any kind of death, that the necessity, either of our food or physic, will require. This killing, therefore, forbidden in the text, refers only unto men, like ourselves; and, therefore, it is very properly rendered by others, THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER.

i. Yet, NEITHER IS EVERY KILLING OF A MAN MURDER: for there

* Manichæi. Aug. de. Civit. Dei. l. i. c. 20.

are several cases, wherein, although one kill another, yet he is no murderer: as,

1. In *the Execution of Justice.*

Magistrates, and such as have lawful power and authority may and ought to put capital offenders to death; and, if they do not, God will charge it upon them as their sin. It is an ancient law upon record, Gen. ix. 6; *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed:* as if there were no other way for expiation, no other method to wash away the stain and guilt of blood; but only by his, who unjustly spilt it. And, again, Deut. xix. 21; *Thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life.* And, indeed, if we rightly consider it, this is not to butcher up mankind, but to preserve them. God hath commanded magistrates to kill, that he might prevent murder: for our nature is so extremely corrupt, that there is no other effectual way to hinder us from killing, but by enjoining the magistrates to do it. And, therefore, as physicians, in cases of violent and immoderate bleeding, do often open a vein in another part of the body, as the best method to stop it, by revulsion; so, when the body politic bleeds by private rage and revenge, gushing out into murders, the way to stop this blood, is, to shed blood.

Neither doth our Saviour's command, not to *resist evil,* Matt. v. 39, gainsay this legal and punitive way of blood-shedding. For those words do only forbid private revenge; not public. We must not be judges in our own causes; nor, when we apprehend ourselves wronged, carve out to ourselves what measures of revenge our wrath and fury shall dictate. We, who have no authority nor commission, ought not to take life for life, nor eye for eye, nor tooth for tooth, much less, life for an injurious word, or an idle quarrel. We must not repay, with the least revenge, those, who have done us the greatest wrongs: in which sense, we must not resist evil; but, if we have in anything suffered wrong, we ought to bring all our causes and complaints to the magistrate; for into his hands hath God put *the sword* of justice: Rom. xiii. 4.

Revenge is so sacred a thing, that none ought to intermeddle with it, but those, whom God hath appointed for he hath solemnly ascribed it to himself: Heb. x. 30; *Vengeance belongeth unto me: I will recompense, saith the Lord.* And he hath constituted the magistrate, as his deputy, in this work and office; and therefore he only ought to revenge, by punishment proportionable to the nature of the crimes committed.

So that, to speak properly, it is only God, and not man, that sheds the blood of wicked persons. The magistrate receives his commis-

sion from God, and doth it as his minister and servant; yea, and in doing it, is so far from doing a cruel and unjust act, an act that will either pollute his hands or stain his conscience, that it makes him the more holy and pure. And, therefore, when Moses called the Levites to slay those idolaters that had worshipped the golden calf, he speaks of it as a holy function: Exod. xxxii. 29; *Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord; even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.*

2. There may be bloodshed *in a Just and Lawful War*, without the charge or crime of murder.

Indeed we are commanded to *follow peace with all men;* and, as much as lies in us, and *if possible*, to have peace *with all men:* Rom. xii. 18. But sometimes, through the ambition and turbulent spirits of others, through their politic designs of picking unjust quarrels, it may be no longer possible to maintain peace; and, in this case, where we have right and equity on our side, it is lawful to wage war. I speak not now of private differences between person and person; but of public, between nation and nation: in which case, the supreme magistrate hath the power of making war and proclaiming peace.

There are some, who decry this assertion; and think it contrary to the temper of a Christian, who is a son of peace, to be a man of war. I confess there is nothing, that can justify war against another nation, but either,

(1) Necessary Defence against an Unjust Invasion. Or,

(2) Recovery of what is unjustly taken away. Thus David, pursued the Amalekites, who had carried his wives away captives. Or,

(3) The Punishing of some great Injury and Wrong. Thus David, likewise, wars against the Ammonites, for the contumelious usage of his ambassadors.

But, where the cause is just, the manner in which we prosecute it warrantable, the authority which engageth us in it being rightly constituted over us, I see nothing, but that it is very fit, when it is very necessary, to take up arms, and in a public war to right ourselves upon injurious enemies. For, as there may be many wrongs done by one party against another, who must be judged by the law common to them both: so there may be many wrongs done by one nation against another, which if they will not consent to redress, there being no common magistrate, nor common law over them both, (except the Law and Right of Nations, of which the more powerful usually make little account;) in this case, certainly, the injured may very justly have recourse to war: for, what law is to persons of the same nation, that war is to persons of a different nation.

We read that among those many penitents that came to John the Baptist for instruction, when soldiers also came, he did not bid them lay down their arms or their commission. He preached not to them, Fight no more; Kill no man; but gave them directions how they should demean themselves in their calling: which he would not have done, if he had thought their calling itself unlawful. He bids them *Do no violence: accuse no man falsely:* but *be content with your pay,* or *wages:* Luke iii. 14.

Neither did our Saviour, when he so highly commended the Centurion for his faith, rebuke him for his profession; but extoled him for taking the ground and argument of his faith from his military calling: Luke vii. 8: *I am a man under authority, having under me soldiers; and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and, to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.* This very calling of his he urgeth Christ with, and makes it an argument to strengthen his faith: that, certainly Christ was able to cure his sick servant; because, if he who was but a captain had such authority over his soldiers as to command them to come and to go at his word, how much more absolute power had Jesus as Lord both of Life and Death, over all bodily diseases to command them to come and go at his pleasure! This I take to be the force and reason of his words. Upon which Christ gives him this large testimonial and encomium: v. 9, *When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people .... I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

But not to multiply more instances, that one place may seem fully convincing and satisfactory, John xviii. 36. When Christ was examined concerning his kingdom, he answered, *My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews:* which clearly implies, that, although wars and fightings were not proper means to advance the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ; yet, if the methods of his humiliation had permitted him to assume the royal sceptre, his servants and followers might lawfully have fought to defend his claim and title. But enough of this.

3. A man may shed blood *in the Necessary Defence of his Person,* without being guilty of murder, when he is suddenly assaulted by those who attempt to take away his life, and hath no other means left him to secure it. In this case, there being no possibility of having recourse to a magistrate for protection, every man is a magistrate to himself.

But here, because all cases of blood are tender, let me caution

you, that it is not enough that the danger be impending, but it must be instant and present; such, wherein a man's life is in all probability lost, if he doth not stand upon his defence. For in dangers, that are only threatened and approaching, we ought to trust Providence: and to use our best diligence to work our escape from them. But, if the assault be sudden, and no way of escape visible, we may lawfully take away the life of him, who unjustly seeks to take ours for this is not a design to kill him, but to preserve ourselves.

Yea, we find, Exod. xxii. 2, that God allows the killing of a thief, if he break into a man's house by night; but not so, if he attempt it by day. And, possibly, the reason of this law might be, because when any cometh upon another in the night, it might be presumed that he takes the advantage of the darkness, not only to steal his goods, but to mischief his person: and, therefore, God allows it as lawful to kill such an one, as a part of necessary defence, From which I think we may safely conclude, that it is lawful also to kill those, who attempt upon our goods, when we have reason to fear they may likewise design upon our persons.

4. There is yet one case more, and that is *Accidental Blood-shedding*, which is not chargeable with murder; when blood is shed, without any intention or purpose of doing it.

Such a case we find mentioned in Scripture: as when, in hewing of wood from a tree, the axe should slip, and by chance kill a man's neighbour: Deut xix. 5. And, therefore, for such innocent manslayers God himself appointed Cities of Refuge, that they might fly unto them, and be safe from the avenger of blood.

But, here, we must look to it, that we be employed about lawful things: otherwise if we be doing that, which is unjustifiable, which accidentally proves to be the death of another, this cannot be excused from murder: and I am sure God exacts the same punishment for it. And therefore it is said, Exod. xxi. 22, that if men strive among themselves, and hurt a woman that she die, though it was not intended by them; yet life shall go for life, because their strife and contention between themselves is an unlawful action.

There ought also to be a due care taken, to avoid any mischief, that may happen upon doing of a lawful action; by giving notice to those, who come in the way of danger, and forbearing to do it whilst they are there.

But, in all cases where the death of another is intended, let it be upon never such violent and sudden a passion, although there were no prepensed and rancouring malice borne towards them before, howsoever our laws may be too favourable to it and call it man-

slaughter; yet, doubtless, it is, in conscience and in the sight of God, wilful murder. For the manslayer, whom the Scripture mentions distinct from the murderer, is only he, who slays his neighbour accidentally; not designing nor intending him any harm. This is the only manslaughter; which our law is pleased to call Chance Medley: and whatsoever is not this, is murder, and ought as such to be punished.

ii. MURDER MAY BE EITHER OF A MAN'S SELF OR OF ANOTHER. Both of them are most black and heinous crimes.

1. As for *Self-Murder*, many of the ancient heathens thought it the most heroic and gallant way of dying, and would have recourse unto it upon very slight occasions; accounting it an universal remedy, that nature had put into their hands, to rid themselves of any trouble, which they were loth to bear.

Yet some, even among the heathens, have, very sharply as well as justly, taxed this wicked custom: among whom, that saying of Aristotle, in his Ethics, is very considerable: "For a man to die, only that he may avoid poverty or crosses, is not gallantry, but mere cowardice; and declares, that he wants courage to encounter them." In which particular, this heathen had a better illumination than the author of the book of Maccabees; who very unworthily commends one Razis, a Jew, for choosing rather to destroy himself, than yield to his enemy. Which passage, besides divers others, do evidently prove those books not to belong to the Canon of Scriptures; but deserve to be called, as they are, Apocryphal.

And, truly, Self-Murder, next to the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, is, I think, the most dangerous and most desperate, that can be committed: and, because it leaves so little room for repentance, it leaves but very little for hope and charity. Those wretched creatures, whom God hath so far abandoned as to permit them to fall into this horrid crime, had they but any the least care of their eternal salvation, they would certainly tremble, when they are offering violence to themselves; considering, that they must instantly appear before God, and lift up those hands at his great tribunal, which they but a minute before embrued in their own blood. It is a sin, which when the Devil tempts men unto, he cannot make use of his most prevailing wile and stratagem: for, when he tempts to other sins, he still drills on the sinner with hopes of living to repent and reform, and promises him mercy and forgiveness; but this

* Το δ'αποθνησκειν φευγοντα πενιαν, η ερωτα, η τι λυπηρον, ουκ ανδρειου αλλα μαλακου δειλου. Arist. Eth. l. iii. c. 7. And this Lucian calls δραπετευειν εκ του βιου, De Morte Peregrini.

of Self-Murder precludes all such hopes and expectations: for they die in their sins; yea, their death is their sin: and what a forlorn estate are they in, who resolve that their last act shall be a damnable sin! These are self-murderers to purpose; and destroy not only their bodies, but their souls too.

Consider, again, that it is a sin committed against the very standard and rule of our love to others: for God hath commanded us to love others as ourselves; and, therefore, as we may not murder another, so much less may we murder ourselves. And those, who are hurried to this impious act, as they do actually destroy themselves, so they do virtually and interpretatively murder and destroy the whole world; and are as guilty before God, as if, together with themselves, they had murdered their parents, their children, their nearest relations, and all mankind besides: and that, because they destroy that fundamental law, which should regulate their love to their neighbours; and which is the stated rule, according to which they should endeavour after their welfare and preservation.

And, therefore, if ever the Devil work upon thy melancholy and discontended pride, to tempt thee to this damnable and almost unpardonable sin, be sure to collect all thy strength unto thee; and, with infinite abhorence of it, command him to avoid. Let not any shame, or poverty, or horrors of conscience, fasten this hellish temptation upon thee: for, know assuredly, that, if thou hearkenest unto them and puttest them in execution, there is no probability, but that thou must pass from temporal sufferings to eternal torments; which, be thy condition in this life never so deplorable and wretched, thou hast no reason to hasten, but wilt, in hell, think that they came too soon upon thee.

2. The *Murdering of Another*, is a most heinous and black sin; a sin, that God doth usually, by some wonderful method of his Providence, detect, and bring to punishment: and which dogs the consciences of those who are guilty of it, with horrid affrights and terrors; and hath sometimes extorted from them a confession of it, when there hath been no other proof nor evidence.

The two greatest sinners, that the Scripture hath set the blackest brand upon, were both murderers: Cain and Judas: the one, the murderer of his brother; the other, first of his Lord and Master, and then of himself.

And God so infinitely hates and detests it, that, although the altar were a refuge for other offenders, yet he would not have a murderer sheltered there: but he was to be dragged from that unviolable sanctuary unto execution; according to that law, Exod. xxi. 14,

If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, and *slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.* And, accordingly we read, 1 Kings ii. 30, 31, that when Joab had fled, and taken hold on the horns of the altar, so that the messengers, who were sent to put him to death, durst not violate that holy place by shedding his blood, Solomon gives command to have him slain even there, as if the blood of a wilful murderer were a very acceptable sacrifice offered up unto God.

And, indeed, in the first prohibition of murder that we meet withal, God subjoins a very weighty reason why it should be so odious unto him: Gen. ix. 6; *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.* So that *Homicidium est Deicidium:* "to slaughter a man, it is to stab God in effigy:" for, though the image of God's holiness and purity be totally defaced in us since the Fall; yet still every man, even the most wicked and impious that lives, bears some strictures of the image of God in his intellectuals, the freedom of his will, and his dominion over the creatures: and God will have every part of his image so revered by us, that he, who assaults man, is esteemed by him, as one who attempts to assassinate God himself.

This of murder is a crying sin. Blood is loud and clamorous. The first, that ever was shed, was heard as far as from earth to heaven: Gen. iv. 10; *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.* And God will certainly hear its cry, and avenge it.

3. But, not only he, whose hands are embrued in the blood of others; but *those also, who are Accessory are guilty of Murder.* As,

(1) Those, who command or counsel it to be done.

Thus David became guilty of the murder of innocent Uriah; and God, in drawing up his charge, accuseth him with it: 2 Sam. xii. 9, *Thou hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.*

(2) Those, who consent to murder, are guilty of it.

Thus Pilate, for yielding to the clamorous outcries of the Jews, *Crucify him, Crucify him,* though he washed his hands and disavowed the fact; yet was as much guilty, as those, who nailed him to the cross.

(3) He, that concealeth a murder, is guilty of it.

And therefore we read, Deut xxi. 6, 7, that, in case a man were found slain and the murderer unknown, the elders of that city were to assemble, and wash their hands, and protest, that they had not shed this blood, neither had their eyes seen it: intimating, that, if they had seen and concealed it, they had thereby become guilty of the murder.

(4) Those, who are in authority, and do not punish a murder, when committed and known, are themselves guilty of it.

Thus, when, by the wicked artifice of Jezebel, Naboth was condemned to die, although Ahab knew nothing of the contrivance till after the execution; yet, because he did not vindicate that innocent blood when he came to the knowledge of it, the Prophet chargeth it upon him: 1 Kings xxi. 19; *Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?* The guilt lay upon him, and the punishment due to it overtook him; although we do not read, that he was any otherwise guilty of it, than in not punishing those who had committed it.

And those magistrates, who, upon any respect whatsoever, suffer a murder to escape unpunished, are said to pollute the land with blood: Num. xxxv. 31, 33; *Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer.....but he shall be surely put to death. So shall ye not pollute the land wherein ye are; for blood defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.*

II. But in this Commandment, not only the perpetration of murder and the actual embruing our hands in the blood of our brother is prohibited; but, likewise, all CAUSES and OCCASIONS leading to it. As,

First. Envy: which is the rust of a cankered soul; a foul, meagre vice, that turns the happiness and welfare of others, into our misery and torment. Thus Cain first enviously repined at the success and acceptation of his brother's sacrifice, and this quickly prompted him to murder.

Secondly. Unjust and immoderate Anger; which, if it be suffered to lie festering in the heart, will turn into the venom of a perfect hatred. This is not only a cause, but a degree of murder; and, as such, it is accounted by our Saviour, who is the best expositor of the Law: Matt. v. 21, 22; *Ye have heard, that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill.... But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause,* is *in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.* Which passage I have formerly, at large, explained to you; and, therefore, I shall at present waive it.

i. Now ANGER IS NOT, as Envy, SIMPLY AND IN ITSELF UNLAWFUL: FOR

1. There may be *a Virtuous Anger,* as well as vicious: an anger, that merits praise and commendation; and is so far from being a sin, that it is a noble and generous grace. To be moved with in-

dignation for the cause of God, when his glory is eclipsed, his name dishonoured, his ordinances profaned, his sanctuary polluted, his people vilified: this is a holy anger; and may well lose that common vulgar appellation of Anger, and pass under the name of Zeal. Such was our Saviour's against those, that defiled the Temple; when, with a miraculous authority, he whipped them out, and vindicated the House of God unto the Worship of God, from the usurpation of the God of this World, Mammon. And, therefore, we find that passage, Ps. lxix. 9, applied to this action of Christ; *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* So likewise, when, by their hypocritical silence, they seemed to discountenance and disallow the curing of a man on the Sabbath Day, it is said, *He looked round about upon them with anger; being grieved for the hardness of their hearts:* Mark iii. 5.

2. Again. There is also *an Innocent and Allowable Anger,* when we have just provocation unto it: for religion doth not utterly root out and destroy the natural passions, but only moderate and regulate them. We may be angry; but we must not sin in our anger: Eph. iv. 26; *Be angry;* but *sin not.* And,

3. There is *a Vicious and Sinful Anger:* which is a rash and foolish passion, a short phrensy, that puts a man, for the present, quite besides himself; and so agitates the spirits, that the blood boils about the heart, and sends up such sooty fumes, as darken the understanding, and deprive him of the use and benefit of his reason.*

The two ingredients, that make up anger, are grief for some injury conceived to be done unto us; and desire of revenge, to discharge our gall and choler upon those that have wronged us, as if we gave ourselves ease by laying a load upon others.

ii. And there are TWO THINGS THAT MAKE ANGER TO BE EVIL AND SINFUL. When it is without Cause. When it is without Bounds.

1. *Causeless Anger* is a kind of murder; when men will fret and rage, although there be no provocation at all given them. Some men's galls overflow so much, that, upon every trivial occasion, or perhaps when there is none, but only their own umbrage and suspicion, they fly out into intemperate speeches and revengeful acts; and are presently all in a flame and combustion, when there is nothing to irritate them, but their own choleric fancies: like clouds, that break out in thunder and lightning, when all the fire and sulphur is bred only in their own bowels.

*—χολος———

Ανδρων εν ϛηθεσσιν ἀεζεται, ηὐτε καπνος.

Hom. Iliad. Σ. 108, 110.

See this testy spirit in Jonah, who, though he were a holy, yet it seems, by his history, he was a very passionate man. First, he is angry, that God would spare Nineveh, after he had prophesied ruin and destruction to it: he grows into a pet, even with the mercy of God, as if he circumvented him, and designed to make him accounted a false prophet: Jonah iv. 1; *It displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was very angry.* Jonah is angry because God is appeased. the froppish man thinks the Almighty too easy; and can hardly forgive that mercy, which so readily forgave the Ninevites. And, again when God had caused a worm to destroy the gourd, which he had prepared to shade his hot and angry head, Jonah falls into another fit of bitter passion for the loss of so poor a thing as his gourd: and, when God meekly expostulates the cause with him, *Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?* his passion so far transports him, that he dares to return this malapert answer, even to the great God, Yea, *I do well to be angry,* to the very *death:* see, here, how his gall overflows, and taints both his reason and his religion: he hurls his fury about against God and men. And, as he sits in his booth, looking, and praying daily that fire and brimstone might come down from heaven to consume that great city, when he saw his expectation frustrated, and the date of his prophecy expired without the accomplishment of it, he quarrels with God, storms against every thing, is weary of his life, and could rather have fired it himself than it should have escaped.

2. As Causeless Anger, so *Immoderate Anger* is a great sin, and a committing of murder in our hearts.

Anger may be immmoderate two ways; either in the degree, or in the Continuance and Duration of it.

(1) In the Degree: when it is vehement and excessive, transporting us beyond our due bounds and temper.

I know no law, that forbids a Christian to resent an injury. Our Saviour Christ himself, when he was buffeted, was sensible of and reproves that insolence: John xviii. 23, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but, if well, why smitest thou me?* Christianity doth not make men stocks; but keeps them from being furies: it doth not root up; but only prune our anger, and cut off all superfluities of naughtiness from it. It may, when just cause is given, warm, but not fire our spirits: but, when it breaks forth into reviling speeches, or into revengeful actions, be sure it hath catched fire then, and is enkindled of hell.

And, yet, the just anger of superiors, as magistrates or masters, or parents, may lawfully break forth upon inferiors in inflicting

due punishments. Nor will this fall under the guilt of a sinful revenge, but a just reward: whilst they are careful, that the punishment exceed not the fault and crime committed.

But, for those, who have no authority over others, to seek revenge upon them, either by railing or defaming speeches, or by repaying injury for injury, is a transgression of this Commandment, the effect of immoderate anger, and a kind of murder in them.

(2) Anger may be immoderate in the Continuance and Duration of it. For age will sour it into hatred; and turn what was wine into vinegar.

And, therefore, the Apostle counsels us, *Be angry; and sin not.* But how may that be done? *Let not the sun,* saith he, *go down upon your wrath:* Eph. iv. 26. And, indeed, he, that goes to bed, and sleeps with anger boiling in his breast, will find the scum of malice upon it the next morning.

This is a passion, which, if it be long cherished, will *executere Spiritum,* "drive away the Spirit." For how canst thou think that the dove-like Spirit of God will reside, where the heart remains full of gall; or, that the celestial flame of divine love should burn bright and clear, where there are so many thick fumes and vapours continually rising up to damp and choke it? How darest thou betake thyself to rest, without first invoking the Great God, and locking up thyself by prayer into his custody and safe tuition? And how darest thou pray, whilst wrath estuates and rankles in thy breast? Canst thou, in faith, pray for forgiveness, who dost not thyself forgive? Our Saviour hath expressly told us, that if we *forgive not men their trespasses, neither will* our *Father which is in heaven forgive us* our *trespasses:* and, therefore, as long as anger and desire of wreaking our revenge upon those, that have wronged us, are entertained by us, so long we invalidate our own prayers, by not performing that condition, without which, God will never hear nor accept them. And therefore be sure you be no longer angry, than you may lawfully abstain from prayer. For we are commanded to lift *up holy hands, without wrath:* 1 Tim. ii. 8. For, certainly, dissension and animosity with men, is no fit temper to prepare us to hold communion with God. And, therefore, though thy gift be ready to be laid upon the altar, remember thyself, look inward, and see whether all be quiet and calm there; if there be no grudge, no anger against thy brother: if thou findest any, either go first, and actually reconcile thyself unto him; or if opportunity will not suffice for that, purge out the leaven of wrath and malice, and reconcile thyself unto him in thy own heart: for, under the Law, no offering

of the Lord was to be mingled with leaven; and now, under the Gospel, God will accept of no oblations, that are offered up unto him with the ferment of wrath and passion: although it may surprise us, yet let it not possess us. See what the Wise Man counsels us: Eccl. vii. 9, *Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry*: or if, through haste and incogitancy, it may seize upon you, yet let it not dwell there; for he adds, *anger* dwelleth *in the bosom of fools*. And, certainly, the calm and peaceable Spirit of God will not dwell in that house, where there are perpetual tumults and discords; and where our unruly passions make such a noise and uproar, that his secret whispers and suggestions cannot be heard.

And thus you see what kind of anger is sinful: that which is causeless; and that, which is immoderate, either in degrees, or in duration. And, likewise, what anger is lawful: that, which is zealous for God's glory; and that, which is rightly tempered, for our own and our neighbour's good.

iii. Let us, in the next place, consider WHENCE SINFUL AND UNWARRANTABLE ANGER DOTH USUALLY PROCEED.

You shall find this bitter fruit to have likewise its root of bitterness. The causes of it are commonly these:

1. *Pride*, and an overweening conceit of ourselves.

Pride is the fruitful mother of many vices; but it nurseth none with more care and tenderness, than this of Anger: and, therefore the Wise Man tells us, Prov. xiii. 10, that only from *pride cometh contention;* and, indeed, as the philosopher* observes, Anger usually ariseth from an opinion, that we are despised and contemned. Now the proud man thinks every one contemns him, that doth not value him as highly as he values himself; that is, beyond all reason; and, if he cannot meet with such fools, he grows angry, and discontented with all the world.

Proud flesh about a sore, is always tender, and cannot bear the least touch: and so proud persons, if they be never so little touched, presently grow enraged; and think they have a great injury done them, if others do not as much admire and respect them, as they do themselves.

Whosoever is much a self-lover, cannot fail of frequent occasions to make him angry. Now the proud man is the greatest self-lover

* Ἡ οργη [εσιν] ορεξης μετα λυπης τιμωριας φαινομενης, δια φαινομενην ολιγωριαν των εις αυτον, η εις αυτ᾽ τινα μη προσηκοντως. Arist. Rhet. l. ii. c. 2.

Αλλ᾽ αυτης γε της οργης αναθεωρων την γενεσιν, αλλης ὑπ᾽ αλλων αιτιων εμπιπτοντας εις αυτην ἑωρων, οἷς επιεικως ἁπασι δοξα τ᾽ καταφρονεισθαι και αμελεισθαι παραγινεται. Plut. de Ira. Cohib. Cap. 12.

in the world: and the misery is, that he usually loves himself without a rival; and if all do not vail to him, to say what he shall dictate, and to think what he shall determine, and to do what he shall prescribe, he takes it for a high affront; and, as he hath given himself an authority over others, he looks that they should submit to it, and acknowledge it. And others, perhaps, having no less pride, or possibly, more reason, refusing to gratify his vain and arrogant humour, quarrels and dissensions arise, and endless jars and discords.

2. Another cause of this passion, is *the Weakness and Feebleness of Nature.*

And, therefore, it is truly observed by Plutarch,* that those, who are of the infirmest natures and weakest constitutions, are most harrassed with it: as, children, more than men; old age, more than the staid part of life; and sick persons, more than those that are in health. For anger is a great weakness, and therefore lodgeth most in the weakest: ants and pismires, and such little creatures, are most busy with their stings; whereas strong and generous creatures must be much provoked, before they will be injurious.

There are many other causes of the violent stirring of this exorbitant passion; as over-much love of vain trifles; which, if they come to any mischance, as usually they do, we are apt to be disturbed at it: easiness to believe at the first recommendation, and engaging our affections in things before we have had trial and experience of them; which, afterwards proving quite contrary to our expectations, the disappointment will excite our choler, &c. But I shall not insist on these.

III. Let us, therefore, proceed to lay down some RULES, FOR THE RESTRAINING AND MODERATING OF ANGER.

And, that, In Others. In Ourselves.

i. In OTHERS.

It is a hellish sport for us to irritate and stir up anger in others, only for us to laugh at, or to make our advantages by it; scarce a less sin, than to make them drunk, that we may abuse them: for prevailing passion is, for the time, a kind of drunkenness; and both are a degree of frenzy and madness. Thou oughtest not, therefore, unnecessarily to exasperate thy brother, whom thou knowest prone to this great weakness: otherwise, be assured that all his intemperate speeches and rash actions shall be imputed unto thee, and are thy sins as well as his; and whatsoever revilings he dischargeth against

* Μείζων θυμος απο μειζονος ασθενειας. Διο και γυναικες ανδρων οργιλωτεραι, και νοσεντες ὑγιαινοντων, και γεροντες ακμαζοντων, και κακως πραττοντες ευτυχουντων. Plut. de Ira Cohib. cap. 8.

thee, shall at last also be charged upon thee. And what a foolish thing is it for thee, to bear the sting of them here, and the punishment of them hereafter! The Wise Man hath told us, Prov. xiv. 9, that they are *Fools*, who *make a mock at sin*. And if thou, for thy recreation, provokest any to an undecent and misbecoming passion, know, that such laughter is deadly to thyself; and thou art like those poisoned persons, who laugh themselves to death.

ii. To prevent, and suppress it in THYSELF, (for there it doth most hurt, since another man's anger is none of my guilt, if I have neither been faulty in stirring it up, nor too easy to catch the flame from him,) take these following Rules and Directions:

1. *Labour and pray for a meek and humble spirit.*

Think lowly of thyself; and then, certainly, thou wilt not be angry, if others conspire with thee in thinking and speaking of thee as thou dost of thyself. Most commonly, Anger, as I have said, proceeds from an opinion of being despised: now do thou first of all despise thyself; and then all reproaches and injuries will signify no more to thee, than that other men approve thy judgment; and that, certainly, can be no cause of anger. Thou wilt not be angry for want of a ceremony or demonstration of respect, which others impose or exact; nor wilt thou quarrel with any, for not relying on thy judgment, or contradicting thy sentiments, when thou shalt reflect upon thine own ignorance and frequent mistakes. They are the high hills, whose heads are wrapped about with clouds and tempests, when the humble valleys are calm and serene: so humble souls, that lie low in their own esteem, remain undisturbed, when lofty persons are still molested with the tempests of their own passions.

2. *Consider how often thou givest God occasion to be angry with thee;* which if he should take, thou wert for ever undone

He bears many affronts and indignities at thy hands. And who art thou? a poor vile worm. And who is he? even the great Almighty God, the Universal King of Heaven and Earth, that he should put up such wrongs at thy hands! And shall God daily take injuries from such a wretched nothing as thou art, God, who is thy Lord and Master; and wilt not thou bear them patiently from thy fellow-servant, who, it may be, is in every respect equal to thee: but only inferior to thee in this, that he provokes thee unjustly? Certainly, were we as tender towards our brethren, as we all desire God should be towards us; could we forbear others, as we ourselves would be forborne; there would never be any quarrel commenced; or, if it were, it would be soon compounded. What saith the Psalmist, Ps. ciii. 9? *He will not alway chide; neither will he keep his*

anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Let this great example be ours, not to be soon moved to anger, or quickly to free ourselves from it. Indeed, many there are, that are slow to anger; and, in that, they imitate God: but then they are tenacious and retentive of wrath, and hardly placable again: their anger is like an impression upon some hard metal; very difficultly made, and as difficult to be effaced. Let such consider what would become of them, if God should be as slow to be reconciled to them, as they are to their brethren. Nay, he is infinitely more wronged by you, than you can be by them; and yet he so far condescends, as first to seek reconciliation. And, although he be infinitely able, by the least expression of his wrath and power, for ever to destroy you; yet, *herein, God commendeth his love unto* you, *that, when* you *were enemies,* ye *were reconciled unto him by the death of his Son.* Certainly, whosoever doth but seriously reflect upon the infinite patience and forbearance of God, if he hath any sweetness diffused into his soul by that consideration, if he hath any conscience of imitating his Heavenly Father in that which is his most adorable attribute, if he hath any care to ascertain unto himself the pardon and remission of his own offences, he will therein find a powerful influence to sway him to the like acts of mercy and forgiveness.

3. Another rule is, *Beware of prejudice against thy brother.*

For prejudice is a very ill interpreter of actions, and will be sure to expound them in the worst sense. Be not easy to believe, that those, who offend thee, do it with design, or that they despise and undervalue thee. Rather think it anything else, than contempt of thee. Believe that his offences proceed rather from his folly and indiscretion; or, that he is forced and necessitated to do it; that others have put him upon it. If they be thy friends that wrong thee, suppose it to be only a fault of their great familiarity, and a misgoverned intimacy. If they be such as are subject to thee, believe that, since they know thou hast power to chastise them, they would not do it purposely to provoke thee. If they be vile and sordid persons, trouble not thyself with their affronts; for thy reputation is above them. Thus, I say, incline to believe it anything, rather than a designed abuse. For, though a strict jealousy over our reputation, and an aptness to think ourselves wronged, seem to proceed from generousness and a sense of honour; yet, indeed, they proceed only from baseness and weakness of mind. Whosoever accounts himself despised by another, is, in a sense, less than he, and confesseth himself his inferior. He is the noble and heroic

spirited person, who is unshaken with the petty affronts and injuries of others; and hath so much stable confidence in the integrity of his actions, that he cannot believe any can traduce him or them: whereas, to be angry at them, doth but, in a sort, justify slanders; and will beget a belief, that that is not altogether groundless, whereat he shows himself so much concerned. It is an old maxim of prudence, *Convitia si irascare, agnita videntur; spreta, exolescunt:* "If you be angry at railings, you seem to acknowledge them; if you contemn them, they vanish."

4. *Be not familiar with any angry person.*

For, as one fire will kindle another; so, it is likely, that his choler will kindle thine, till both flames into an inordinate and extravagant passion. See the direction expressly given us: Prov. xxii. 24, 25. *Make no friendship with an angry man; and, with a furious man, thou shalt not go, Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul;* indeed, there is no such fuel to wrath, as wrath; and it is a very hard matter to refrain being angry with him, who will causelessly be angry with us. And, as thou must shun the company and acquaintance of choleric persons, so likewise of scoffers: for a scoff and a jeer is many times more provoking, than a blow; and nothing will sooner kindle the coals of contention, than a biting taunt: and, therefore, Solomon adviseth us, Prov. xxii. 10, *Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.*

5. It is very good counsel, *If thou feelest any motions of this unruly passion begin to stir in thy heart,* that thou *arrest it for some time, before thou either speak or act.*

Let this mud have some time to settle again, that reason may, in the mean while, recover its throne, and direct thee how to govern thyself like a wise man and a Christian. Speak not whilst thou art in the impetuous hurries of thy passion: for it was well said of Plutarch, * That "it is good in a fever, but much better in anger, to have the tongue kept clean and smooth." Put an interval of time, between thy anger and thy actions: for those, who act in the violence and paroxysms of their anger, do either they know not what, or else what they may have reason to repent of: and, therefore, Solomon tells us, that *the discretion of a man deferreth his anger:* Prov. xix. 11; and *the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water:* Prov. xvii. 14. At first when a man cutteth the bank of a river, the passage is but little, and the stream may be easily stopped: but, by continual running, it will wear away the earth, and widen

* Αγαθον μεν εξιν εν πυρετω χρειττον δε εν οργη την γλωτταν ἀπαλην εχειν και λειαν. Plut. de Ira. Cohib.

the gap; and whole floods and currents will pour out, where but some few drops were intended.

6. *Contemplate the huge ugliness and deformity of this sin in others;* how it makes men brutish in their souls, and deformed likewise in their countenances. It inflames the face, fires the eyes, and makes a man look like a fury, deafens the ears, froths the mouth, makes the heart beat and pant, the tongue stammer, the voice harsh and rough, the speech precipitate, and oftentimes, ridiculous: briefly, it puts the whole man into a preternatural fever; and transforms the body into a monster, and the man into a devil.

And, what! shall I give way to passion, so uncomely a passion, that will make me scorned, when I would seem most terrible? Certainly, were there no other thing whereof to accuse this immoderate anger, it were enough to render it odious: but, when it not only destroys what I was, but seeks the ruin and destruction of others, it concerns me to stop it in its first rise and ebullitions: lest the boilings of my blood proceed so far, as to attempt the shedding of the blood of others.

And so much for the Sixth Commandment.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

In opening the former Commandment, we have seen what care God takes for the security and indemnity of every man's person. This Command, which I have now read unto you, extendeth farther; and provideth for his security, as he is considered mystically in marriage-union, which of twain maketh one flesh. The one defends him from the violence of bloody rage and revenge; the other from the violations of impure lusts.

I judge it not convenient to be too circumstantial, in showing you what is prohibited under this precept. I know that some, especially the Popish Casuists in their treatises of Moral Divinity, such as Sanches, Diana, &c., have spoken of these things so minutely, and with such a filthy accurateness, that they stuprate the very eyes and fancies of their readers; rather teach vice, than condemn it; and instruct the ignorant to sin skilfully, rather than convince the guilty to bring them to repentance. Some wickednesses there are, which it is far better not to reprove, than to name: it is more expedient, to leave those who are guilty of them to be lashed by their natural light and conscience, than, by exagitating such crimes, teach others, not so much to abhor, as to practise them. And let this be

my apology, if I pass over this subject with more than my accustomed brevity.

I. That, which is here literally and expressly FORBIDDEN, is

i. That detestable and loathsome sin of ADULTERY.

Which, properly taken, is a sin committed between persons, the one or both of them married unto another.

However, even in the highest circumstances, it is a most heinous sin; but, on the married person's side, most inexcusable and intolerable. Gen. xxxix. 9, it is called a *great wickedness against God*, even on the unmarried man's part. And, Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22, the temporal punishment assigned unto it, is no less than death: the same punishment, that belonged to murder; and greater, than was inflicted for theft.

And, if human laws were as severe in the punishment of the sin as divine, the fear of it might possibly be of greater influence, to deter men from such filthiness, than either shame or the denunciation of eternal punishments. Yea, we read in history,* that our progenitors, the English Saxons, even while they remained pagans and idolaters, so hated this sin, that they made it, yea and simple fornication also, punishable with death; and severely inflicted it upon those that were found guilty: which custom continued among them, after they were converted to Christianity, until the year of Christ 750, when the Antichristian See of Rome, the Mother of Whoredoms, abrogated this law, as too rigorous for Christians. And Job calleth it *a heinous crime: yea, an iniquity to be punished by the judges: a fire, that consumeth to destruction:* Job xxxi. 11, 12.

But, although they may escape the judgment of men, either through the secresy of their wickedness, or the too gentle censures of the law: yet they shall not escape the righteous judgment of God; nor those everlasting punishments, that he hath prepared for them in hell: Heb. xiii. 4. *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

There are two things in this sin of Adultery, that make it so exceeding heinous.

1. The *Luxury and Incontinency* of it: in letting loose the reins to a brutish concupiscence; and yielding up the body to pollution, and the soul to damnation.

2. The *Injustice* of it: being a deceit of the highest and most injurious nature that can be. For,

(1) It is the violation of a most solemn vow and covenant: and so adds perjury to unfaithfulness; alienating that person to another, who, by the most sacred and strictest obligations, is bound only to

* Speed's Chron. p. 289.

that partner and yoke-fellow, to whom God, and their own consent, and the legal rites of the Church and State, have addicted them.

(2) It is the source and cause of a spurious and suppositious birth: bringing in a strange blood into the inheritance of lawful children; whereby this unfaithfulness becomes theft, as well as perjury.

But, although this sin of Adultery be alone mentioned in the Command; yet, according to the rules laid down in the beginning of this work, all other kinds of Uncleanness are forbidden under the name of this one gross crime. For the law of God is perfect: and, as all manner of chastity, both in our thoughts, speeches and actions, is there enjoined us: so, likewise, whatsoever is in the least contrary and prejudicial to a spotless chastity and an inviolate modesty, is hereby forbidden. And, therefore,

ii. This Commandment forbids the uncleanness of FORNICATION.

Which, properly, is the sin committed betwixt two single persons. And, though it hath not some aggravations, that belong to the other; yet it is an abominable sin, in the sight of God.

I know how it is extenuated by the impure Romanists,* as a small stain, that may easily be washed off by the sprinkling of a little Holy Water. But it is no wonder, if they, who have drank deep of the Cup of the Fornications of the Great Whore, and are guilty of spiritual fornication, should speak lightly of corporal fornication also.

But let us hear how God, who is infinite purity, hath sentenced this sin, when he threatens that he himself will judge whoremongers; and tells us, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, that *neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers.....shall* ever *inherit the kingdom of God.* No, the New Jerusalem which is above, is a Holy City, and no unclean thing shall forever enter into it. *Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters:* Rev. xxii. 15. And it were well with them, if all their punishment were only to be left without: but there is a lake of fire prepared for them, into which they shall be cast and plunged; the fire of hell, to punish the flames of lust. Rev. xxi. 8, *The fearful, the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers* (you see how, in both places, they are strung up with the vilest and most infamous sinners,).....*shall have their* portion *in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.* The Apostle reckons up this, as one of the works of the flesh: Gal. v. 19, *The works of the flesh are manifest; which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, &c.,* and exhorts us to a careful

* Mazarin. in Psal. li. Durand. Sent. l. iv. dist. 33. 92. Emman. Sa. Art. 20. Tit. Episcopus.

mortification of it: Col. iii. 5. *Mortify, therefore, your members, which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, &c.*

iii. Here, likewise, are forbidden all INCESTUOUS MIXTURES; or uncleanness between those, who are related to each other within the degrees of kindred specified, Lev. xviii., from the 6th to the 18th verse; whether the kindred be by affinity or consanguinity; i. e. whether by former marriage, or by blood and descent. And the nearer any persons are so related to us, the greater is the abomination if we approach unto them: whether it be with pretence of marriage, which, in this case, is null and void; or, without any such pretence.

iv. Here is likewise forbidden POLYGAMY, or a taking *a wife to her sister;* that is, to another: Lev. xviii. 18.

God, indeed, seemed to connive at this in the holy men of old: yet it was never otherwise than a sin, from the foundation of the world. And, therefore, the Prophet Malachi refers us to the primitive institution of marriage, to show the obliquity of this practice: Mal. ii. 15, *Did not he make one?* that is, Did not he create one woman for one man? *Yet had he the residue of the Spirit:* i. e. the same Spirit and power, whereby he created all things in the world, resided still in God: and, therefore, he could as easily have formed more women as well as one, had he not purposed to oblige them one to the other solely; and to teach them, by their being paired at first, not to seek multiplication of wives afterwards. Therefore, Polygamy was unlawful in the beginning; even then, when the necessity of increasing the world might seem to plead for it: and how much more unlawful now, when that necessity is ceased! Besides this, the Apostle hath commanded, 1 Cor. vii. 2, *Let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband.*

v. Here also are forbidden all those monsters of UNNATURAL LUST, and those prodigies of villainy and filthiness, which are not fit to be named among men; but thought fit to be punished upon beasts themselves: as ye may read, Lev. xx. 15, 16, and Lev. xviii. 22, 23.

vi. All those things, that may be INCENTIVES to lust and add fuel to this fire, are likewise forbidden in this Command: all impurities of the eyes, of contact, of lewd and obscene speech: all immodest spectacles, wanton actions, uncivil and garish attire; or whatsoever else may kindle, either in ourselves or others, any unchaste affections: for all these things do but lay in provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof.

vii. Because this law is spiritual, therefore it not only forbids

the gross outward acts of filthiness, but the INWARD UNCLEANNESS OF THE HEART; all lustful contemplations, and ideas, and evil concupiscences.

For, it is not enough to refrain unchaste desires from breaking forth into act; but we must also refrain our hearts from entertaining any such desires. These flames, pent up in the heart, will soot and consume it; and, though its ruin be more invisible, yet it will be sad and fatal. As there is a heart-murder, so there is a heart-adultery; and he, that commits speculative uncleanness, and prostitutes his thoughts and imaginations to the impure embraces of filthy lust, is, according to our Saviour's interpretation, guilty of the transgression of this command: so, Matt. v. 27, 28; *Ye have heard that it was said* to *them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

And thus you see what is prohibited.

All that now remains, is, To set forth the exceeding Heinousness of this sin; and to show you why it is so justly odious unto God, and ought to be so unto us. And, To give you some Rules and Directions, which may secure you from it.

II. The GREATNESS AND HEINOUS NATURE OF THIS SIN appears,

i. In that it is a sin, which MURDERS TWO SOULS AT ONCE; and, therefore, the most uncharitable sin in the world.

Other sinners can perish singly. The Swearer damns none by his oaths but himself; and, although he curse others to the pit of hell, yet shall descend thither alone for them. The Drunkard, with his intemperance drowns but his own soul in perdition. The bloody Murderer may say with Lamech, Gen. iv. 23; *I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my own hurt.* And, indeed, all other sinners, though their wickedness prompt them to draw in associates and partakers with them; yet the nature of their sin doth not require a partnership in their guilt; but they may be solitarily wicked, and perish alone: only this sin of Adultery necessarily requires partnership and involves another in the same condemnation? And is it nothing to thee, that another's damnation shall be set upon thy score, and the blood of their souls charged upon thine for ever? Think with yourselves, what horrid greetings these unclean wretches will give each other in hell, when they, who have here wallowed together in beastly sensuality, shall there wallow together in unquenchable flames; and, with ineffable anguish, exclaim against and curse, both themselves and one another: the one, for enticing; the other, for consenting; and both, for fulfilling their impure desires.

Or, suppose that God should vouchsafe thee repentance unto life; yet, art thou sure that his justice and severity will not harden the other in this sin, to which thou hast been the author and persuader? How knowest thou, but they may persist, and perish in their wickedness? Divine vengeance may snatch them away, without affording them space or grace to repent. And is it nothing to thee, that thou hast damned a soul, as well as defiled a body; and, for the satisfying of thy brutish lust, hast brought upon them everlasting woes and torments? If God hath granted thee mercy, how anxiously solicitous oughtest thou to be, to deliver those out of the snares of the Devil, whom thou hast entangled therein; and, by all holy counsels and remonstrances, reduce them unto God by repentance! Or, if a speedy execution of Divine Justice should cut them off before, what a sad consideration will it be to thee, that thou hast eternally ruined a poor soul! This, if thou hast any sense of sin, or of the wrath of the Great God due unto it, will make thee go mourning all thy days, and bring down thy grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

ii. This is THE MOST DEGRADING SIN OF ALL OTHERS.

It debaseth a man from the excellency of his nature, and resembles him to the condition of brute beasts. The perfection of a man is, to govern himself according to law and reason; to bound and circumscribe his actions, by the rules of what is fit and honest: whereas beasts show the inferiority of their natures, by the scope and range of their unguided appetites: *per vagas et effusas libidines.* Hence the Prophet compares adulterers to *fed horses; every one* neighing *after his neighbour's wife:* Jer. v. 8. And God joins such impure persons with the vilest and most detestable of brute beasts: Deut. xxiii. 18; *Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, nor the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow: for even both these are* an *abomination to the Lord thy God.*

iii. This is a sin, that DOTH, MOST OF ALL OTHERS, OBSCURE AND EXTINGUISH THE LIGHT OF A MAN'S NATURAL REASON AND UNDERSTANDING.

Nothing doth so much darken the understanding, as the fumes of lust: Hos. iv. 11, *Whoredom, and wine, and new wine take away the heart.* And, to this, the Apostle gives testimony: Eph. iv. 18, 19, *Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; Who, being past feeling, have given themsleves over....to work all uncleanness with greediness.* So far doth this beastly sin besot the mind and befool men, that, according to the chaste and modest

phrase of Scripture language, it is frequently called *committing of folly;* as if there were no folly like to this, and it alone deserved to carry away the name and title from all other sins: and, indeed, it is a most notorious and egregious folly; for a short pang and epilepsy of sensual delight, to betray the soul to a gloomy dulness, bitter remembrance, guilt, and eternal shame and death.

iv. This is a sin justly the MOST INFAMOUS AND SCANDALOUS AMONGST MEN.

A sin, that brands them with the greatest shame and reproach; a reproach, which can never be wiped away: And, certainly, if such an one doth ever seriously consider his own filth, he cannot but be ashamed of himself: for, although there be a shame consequent upon the act of every sin; yet the credit and reputation of a man is never so deeply blemished, nor so foully stained by any sin, as that of adultery: Prov. vi. 32, 33, *Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he, that doeth it, destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.* Yea, the dishonour of adulterous parents is so foul, that, like a black blot, it diffuseth and spreadeth itself even upon their children: Deut. xxiii. 2, *A bastard* was not to *enter into the congregation of the Lord,* unto the *tenth generation.*

v. Consider, that this sin of uncleanness is A KIND OF SACRILEGE; a converting of that, which is sacred and dedicated, unto a profane use.

What saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 19? *Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?* And if it were a sacrilegious impiety to turn the Temple of God, which consisted only of vile materials, wood and stone, to vile and inferior uses; if our Saviour's zeal burned within him when he saw the sanctuary turned into a market, and the house of God made a den of thieves; how much more heinous wickedness is it, to convert the living temples of the Everliving God, even our bodies, which were redeemed and consecrated unto God by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, unto impure and unclean uses, and to turn his sanctuary into a stew! *The body is not for fornication; but for the Lord.* And *your bodies are the members of Christ.* Will ye *then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.* And the Apostle thinks this sacrilegiousness of uncleanness so high an aggravation of the sinfulness of it, that he insists on it again, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye.*

vi. Consider, if all these things will not prevail, the DREADFUL

PUNISHMENT, that God threatens to inflict upon all, who are guilty of this sin.

Yea, he speaks of it as a sin, that he can hardly be persuaded to pardon; a sin, that puzzles infinite mercy to forgive: Jer. v. 7, 8, 9, *How shall I pardon thee for this? .... When I had fed* thy children *to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one* neighing *after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?* And, indeed, God doth often, in this life, visit this sin: sometimes, by filling their loins with strange and loathsome diseases: Prov vi. 26: sometimes, by reducing them to extreme beggary; for this sin, as Job speaks, is *a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all his increase.* Yea, this very sin is so great a punishment for itself, that the Wise Man tells us, Prov. xxii. 14, that those whom God hates, shall fall into it. Yea, and to express the exceeding sinfulness of this sin of uncleanness, the Apostle tells us, that God made it the punishment of several other sins, as black and horrid as can be well conceived. Rom. i. 23, when he had spoken of the gross idolatry of the heathens in worshipping images, and falling down before stocks and stones, he subjoins, verse 24, that for this cause, *God also gave them up to uncleanness*: as if uncleanness were bad enough to punish idolatry; and those were sufficiently plagued for their spiritual uncleanness, who were abandoned over unto corporal pollutions. But, howsoever, although this sin may sometimes escape infamy, through concealment; and other temporal judgments of God, through patience and forbearance: yet it will certainly find them out at the last; and then those, who have burned together in lust, shall burn together in unquenchable flames. *They shall have their portion in the lake, that burneth with fire and brimstone.*

These are the demonstrations of the Heinousness of this sin.

III. Let me now give you some CAUTIONARY RULES and DIRECTIONS; by observing of which, you may be preserved from it.

i. Be sure that you KEEP A NARROW WATCH OVER YOUR SENSES. For those are the sluices, which, instead of letting in pleasant streams to refresh, do commonly let in nothing but mud to pollute the soul. There is no actual filthiness in the heart of any, but came in by these inlets. Through these, the Devil casts in abundance of filth: he stirs up indwelling lust; and, by the sinful object which the senses convey to the soul, he dungs that ground, which of itself was too fruitful before. Thus the Devil makes use of an adulterous

eye, to range abroad, and fetch in provision for uncleanness: and, by it, as by a burning-glass, he sets the heart on fire; and then blows up the flames through the ears, by hearing lascivious discourses: and, therefore, make a covenant with thine eyes; and carefully divert them from all loose glances, and all alluring and enticing objects: stop thine ears against all rotten and filthy communication; and, if any begin such obscene talk, as is the common raillery of our days and almost of every company, blush not thou to reprove them; but, by thy reproofs, make them blush at their own shame and wickedness.

ii. ADDICT THYSELF TO SOBRIETY AND TEMPERANCE; and, by these, beat down thy body, and keep it in subjection to thy reason and religion.

For, certainly, they, who indulge themselves in gluttony or drunkenness, their excess will froth and foam over into lust. And, therefore, it is said, in that forementioned place, Jer. v. 7, that when the Israelites were *fed to the full, they then committed adultery.*

iii. CONTINUALLY EXERCISE THYSELF IN SOME HONEST AND LAWFUL EMPLOYMENT.

Lust grows active, when we grow idle. And, therefore, as *fulness of bread,* so likewise *idleness,* is reckoned as one of the sins of impure Sodom: Ezek. xvi. 49. David, when he walks idly upon the roof of his house, lies open to the snares and is inveigled by the beauty of Bathsheba: had he then been at his harp and his psalms, he might have driven the evil spirit from himself, as formerly he did from his master Saul. Running streams preserve themselves clear and pure; whereas standing pools soon corrupt, and breed noisome and venomous creatures. While our mind is employed, there will be no time left for lust to dally with our fancy, nor to dandle an unclean affection in our thoughts: and, therefore, it may be remarked as a considerable circumstance in Joseph's rejecting the enticements of his lewd mistress, that the text saith, He *went into the house to* dispatch *his business:* Gen. xxxix. 11; noting to us, that the honest care of our affairs is an excellent preservative to keep us from this sin of wantonness and uncleanness. But, above all,

iv. BE EARNEST AND FREQUENT IN PRAYER: and, if thou sometimes joinest fasting with thy prayers, they will be shot up to heaven with a cleaner strength.

For this sin of uncleanness is one of those devils, that *goes not out but by fasting and prayer.* God is a God of Purity. Instantly beg of him, that he would send down his pure and chaste Spirit into thy heart, to cleanse thy thoughts and thy affections from all unclean desires. Beg that the Holy Ghost would but once touch thy heart,

with the dear sense of his eternal love; that he would diffuse such a celestial flame through thy soul, as may ravish it with a heavenly zeal and ardour, and make it scorn to stoop to the ignoble love of poor inferior objects. Represent to him, that thy body is his temple, and thy heart his altar in it; and desire of him, that no strange unhallowed fire may flame on his altar.

Whilst thou diligently and conscientiously makest use of these means, thou mayest comfortably expect to be kept pure and immaculate: innocent in thy soul, and clean in thy body: and, as thou hast kept thyself undefiled here; so, hereafter, thou shalt be found worthy to walk with the *Lamb in white.*

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not Steal.

The foregoing Commandment, as you have heard, requires chastity in our persons. This, which I have now read unto you, requires honesty and uprightness in our dealings.

A virtue. immediately founded upon that first practical principle of all human converse, which our Saviour lays down, Matt. vii. 12; *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them:* and recommends it to us, as the brief sum and epitome of all the Scriptures; *for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

A principle, that carries such innate light and clear evidence in itself, that the very heathens do frequently inculcate it in their writings, as the primary dictate of that morality which they taught.

This is a maxim, which we all assent unto, not by any elaborate instructions, or dint of arguments, or any long train of consequences; but it strongly masters our understandings by its native evidence, and springs up in us an unpremeditated resolve of reason.

Both God and Nature have set up this standard in our consciences: and, usually, there needs no other judge of our actions towards others, than by comparing them with what, in the like cases, we would think just and fit to be done towards ourselves.

It may be, we are all partial to ourselves in our present concerns. And whilst we look only that way, we may possibly seek all advantages to promote them, though to another's detriment. But both reason and religion teach us to put ourselves in their stead; and then to manage all our transactions with them, as we ourselves would judge just and reasonable, were their condition ours.

And, therefore, when thou dealest with another, thou shouldst first be both parties to thyself. As, for instance: a servant should sit down, and consider with himself, what respect he would require,

were he in the same circumstances with his master, and had servants under him. Children should consider what obedience they would expect, were they parents of children: subjects, what honour and submission they might reasonably demand, were they magistrates: and so, in any other relation. And, when they have thus seriously pondered it in their own thoughts, let them then perform the same duties to others in their real condition, which they judged to belong to them in their personated condition: for it is a never failing rule for the direction of our practice, That what thou judgest due to thyself, wert thou in another man's condition, is certainly as due to him in his own; and, if thou actest not accordingly, thou betrayest a great deal of selfishness and sinful partiality.

This is a rule applicable to all affairs; and there is scarce any one occurrence of a man's life, but he may regulate himself in it according to this direction.

And, indeed, there is scarce need of any other. Whatsoever thou hast to transact with thy brother, though perhaps thou mayest spy advantages upon him; and such, as if thou shouldest take, possibly he might never know, or never be able to redress: yet then take thy conscience aside, and seriously ask whether thou couldst be content, and think it honest and just to be so dealt with, thyself: if not, whatsoever the temptation be, or how much soever thou mightest gain by hearkening unto it, reject it with scorn; as that, which would induce thee to violate the first principle of common honesty among men, and contradicts all the laws, both of Nature and Scripture.

Were this rule but more generally observed among men, the world would not have that cause to cry out of rapine, extortion, oppression, fraud and injustice, that now it hath. The rich would not grind the faces of the poor; nor the poor causelessly clamour against the rich: superiors would not tyrannize over their inferiors; nor inferiors murmur or rebel against their superiors: but an equal peace and uniform justice would outspread the face of the whole earth, and *righteousness* would *run down* our streets *as a mighty stream*.

And, therefore, let me once again recommend it to you (for, indeed, I cannot press it too often) that you would frequently set this Golden Rule before your eyes; to do nothing to any other person, which, were you in this capacity, you would think unjust to be done unto yourselves: and, whatsoever you would expect from others as your due, were you in their place and they in yours, to perform the very same to them: for, otherwise, you cannot but condemn yourselves in your actions, whilst you do that, which, upon this supposition, you cannot but be convinced is unjust; and withhold

that, which you know to be due, and which yourselves would expect should be yielded to you by others. This is a dictate of nature and right reason: this is the sum of the Law and the Prophets; and all those various precepts, which are given us in the Scriptures for the conduct of our lives, are but as so many lines, that meet all in this centre; and, if we apply it to each particular Command of the Second Table, we shall find them all founded upon this, and to be interpreted by it. We are required to honour superiors; to abstain from murder, from adultery, from theft, from false accusations, from coveting what rightfully belongs to another; and, all this, according to the same measures, by which we would have others to perform these very duties to us. So that self, which is now the great tempter to wrong and injure others, were it goverened according to this universal maxim, would be the greatest patron and defender of other men's rights and dues.

I. I have long insisted on this, both because it is of such general influence unto the right ordering of our conversation; and also because the most visible and apparent violation of this natural law, is by the sin of Theft, FORBIDDEN in this Commandment, of which I am now treating.

i. THEFT, IN THE GENERAL, is an unjust taking or keeping to ourselves, what is lawfully another man's. He is a thief, who withholds what ought to be in his neighbour's possession; as well as he, who takes from him what he hath formerly possessed.

All theft presupposeth a right and propriety: for where nothing doth of right appertain unto me, nothing can be unjustly taken or detained from me.

1. Certain it is, that *God is the great Lord and Proprietor both of Heaven and Earth, and of all things in them:* Ps. xxiv. 1; *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:* and, l. 10; *Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.* By him and of him, are all things; and for his will and pleasure's sake, they are, and were created.

2. *This great and absolute Lord hath granted unto man a large Charter of the World;* and, when he had taken an exact inventory of those goods with which he had furnished this great house, the universe; (He *saw every thing that he had made; and, behold, it was very good:* Gen. i. 31,) then he sets man to live in it, as his tenant; and freely gives him the use of and dominion over all the works of his hands: Gen. i. 28; *Replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over* all *the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* So, the Psalmist,

Ps. cxv. 16; *The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's: but the earth, hath he given to the children of men.* A large and regal gift, whereby he hath made over all sublunary things unto man: reserving unto himself the sovereignty and supreme lordship of all; and requiring only from man the homage and payment of obedience. Yet,

3. *This large charter and donation gave no particular propriety unto any:* neither, if man had continued in his happy and innocent estate, would there have been any need of *meum* or *tuum*, or any partition of these earthly possessions: but the common blessings had been enjoyed in common; and all things, which covetousness and corruption now ravine after, would have been as promiscuously enjoyed and used, as the common light and air; and each particular man's share in those blessings, would have been sufficient and satisfactory. But,

4. Sin entering into the world, *their desires grew immoderate after these earthly enjoyments, and their attempts to attain them injurious unto others*: so that it became necessary to prescribe bonds and limits to them; and to divide among them, what before lay in common among all; that each man, knowing his assigned portion, might rest satisfied with it, and be restrained from the unjust invasion and usurpation of another's right. And,

5. This could no otherwise be effected, but by *human laws, by mutual compact and agreement, declaring what should be accounted as every man's right and propriety.* So that it is law, which is the great determiner of propriety; and there is nothing Mine or Thine, farther than this assigns it unto us. Indeed equity must sometimes interpose to moderate the letter of the law: for, in some cases, should we rigorously prosecute our right, and insist upon every punctilio that we may call our due; this, although it would not be unjust, yet it would be justice turned into gall and wormwood: it would be a breach and violation of the Law of Christ and of Charity, which requires us rather to part with our own in small matters, than to be vexatious or contentious in recovering or defending it.

Thus you see how all right and property first came into the world: a general right, by the donation of God; a particular right, by the sanction of laws, allotting to each man his portion; which to invade, or usurp, from him, is injustice or theft.

Whence it follows, that where there is no society, in occupation of any part of the earth, the right accrues to the first possessor; and, where things are found which appertain to none, they fall to the first seizer: for there can be no theft committed, where there is no precedent title. If any therefore should providentially be cast into some

desert and uninhabited part of the world, that general charter, that God hath given unto mankind of possessing the earth, empowers them to seize on it as theirs; and they may lawfully make use of the blessings of it in common, till, by mutual consent, they shall divide to each other their part and portion: but, after such a partition made, to use the same liberty is no longer lawful, but theft and robbery.

Thus you see what Theft is; and that this law of God, prohibiting us to steal what is another's, doth presuppose a law of man, which maketh property, and causeth things to become either ours or another's.

ii. There are MANY KINDS OF THEFT.

1. The first kind of Theft, is, *the taking away of what rightfully belongs to another, whether God or man.*

(1) The highest and chief is that, which is committed against God by Sacrilege.

Now Sacrilege is an alienating from God, whatsoever he hath appropriated to himself, or is upon good grounds dedicated to the encouragement and maintenance of his honour and service.

Indeed, the alienating of what hath been given to superstitious or idolatrous uses, cannot be justly branded with this black mark of sacrilege; for it was not so much given unto God, as unto ignorance and superstition: and, therefore, our ancestors have done well and piously, in dissolving those nests and cages of unclean birds, that were so numerous and burthensome in these kingdoms; but, withal, in my judgment, would have done much better, if they had converted their revenues to some public use, either for the benefit of the Church or Commonwealth, rather than to their own private and particular gain.

But, where anything is indeed consecrated unto God, and set apart for the maintenance and encouragement of his worship and service, it is no less than sacrilege and robbing of God, to alienate any part of this to any secular uses, or to detain it from that use unto which it was separated.

And, of this, God himself grievously complains: Mal. iii. 8, 9. *Will a man rob God?* as if it were a sin so heinous, as that it is hardly to be supposed any man would be guilty of it. What! not to allow that God his share among them, who had liberally afforded them all things to enjoy! *Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.*

Certainly, those things, which are appointed for the worship and service of God, whether they be originally by divine right or not,

yet cannot be alienated nor detained, without involving the persons or the nation that doth thus, in a most direful curse: for this is no other than a robbing God of his right. And, how far these nations may be concerned in this, and how deeply sunk under this curse, I leave it to the consideration of those, who have no other interests to sway their judgments, but that of piety and honesty.

(2) Theft is committed against Men, by an unjust seizing or detaining what of right belongs unto them. And this may be done, either by fraud or force: and therefore, our Saviour, in reciting the Commandments, mentions them both, Mark x. 19, *Do not steal*: *Defraud not.*

(3) This is a sin, that God hath threatened with many severe curses and punishments.

[1] The temporal punishment, which the Scripture awards unto it, is a fourfold and sometimes a fivefold Restitution: as you may see, Exod. xxii. 1.

And therefore Zaccheus, when he was converted, offers a fourfold restitution to those, whom he had wronged; Luke xix. 8, *If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restored him fourfold.*

And yet, besides this restitution, it seems that sometimes the offenders were to be put to death; especially if the circumstances of their theft added cruelty and oppression unto it. This appears in the parable of Nathan: 2 Sam. xii. When he had most artificially aggravated the crime of the rich man, in taking away the poor man's lamb, he so raised David's compassion and indignation, that he pronounced this sentence: v. 5, 6. *The man, that hath done this thing, shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.* So that you see, that, even under the Law of Moses, it was not unlawful, in some cases, to punish a thief with death; although the usual and prescribed punishment was restitution. Indeed, our law condemns them to death: nor is it justly to be reprehended, for rooting out such banes and pests from the commonwealth: for since punishments are to be inflicted, not so much out of revenge as caution; not because some have offended, but to deter others from offending; it is but reasonable that the penalty should answer this end: which we might very well doubt, whether among us any lighter than death would do, since we see so many still persist in this wicked course of life, notwithstanding the severity of the punishment which the law provides for them. *Skin for skin; and all, that a man hath, will he give for his life.* If, therefore, the fear of death itself cannot be forcible enough to deter them, certainly the fear of restitution would be much less effectual; and such a gentle and mitigated punishment would but open a wide gap to all manner of robbery and rapine.

But, besides the punishment which is threatened by the law consider.

[2] God leaves a Curse upon what is gotten by theft and deceit. A curse, that will blast and consume all such wicked increase. They put it into a bag with holes; and, by some unperceivable providence, it strangely wastes and slips away between their fingers. But, usually, luxury and intemperance devour what is got by theft and rapine; God, by his righteous judgment, making one sin the vengeance of another. But, however, some secret withering curse seizeth upon it; and what is thus wickedly added to our former possessions, will rub its rust and canker upon them all; and, if restitution be not duly made, will insensibly prey upon them and consume them. And, therefore, saith the Wise Man, Prov. xxi. 7; *The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them:* and, Jer. xvii. 11; *As* the *partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he, that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and, at his end shall be a fool.* Many times God raiseth up such against them, who shall deal with them as they have dealt with others; and, when these sponges are full of what they have unjustly sucked up, shall squeeze them, and make them refund their ill-gotten treasure. Thus God threatens the Chaldeans: Hab. ii. 8; *Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee.* Such unjust gettings tend only unto poverty: and, in this sense, it is no solecism to say they have but gained a loss, and treasured for themselves and their posterity want and beggary. And, therefore, as you desire to thrive in the world, and to have your earthly comforts multiplied; so, be sure, that no gain of robbery, or oppression, or fraud and deceit be found in your hands: for this will devour even what you have gotten lawfully.

[3] Anxieties and Perplexities of Mind do always accompany ill-gotten wealth.

For it is a sin so much against the very Light of Nature, that conscience, if it be not utterly stupified and senseless, will be still molesting and haunting men with troublesome thoughts and reflections: besides, the fear of detection, and the shame and punishment which will follow upon it, must needs be a continual disturbance unto them. Whereas, what is gotten with a good conscience, and in an honest and lawful calling, whether it be more or less, brings this contentment with it, that a man may quietly sit down and rejoice in that portion, which the providence and bounty of his gracious God and Heavenly Father hath here afforded him. He drinks no widow's tears, nor orphan's blood. He eats not the flesh of the poor, nor breaks the bones of the needy. His conscience gnaws not

upon him, whilst he is feeding on what his honest labour and industry have prepared for him: and, although it be but a bit of bread and a cup of water, that he can procure; yet is he entertained at a continual feast. His fare may be but mean; yet his cheer, his joy and comfort, is great: and the coarsest morsel he eats is far more savoury to him, than all the heightened delicates of rich oppressors, whose consciences mingle gall and wormwood with their most pleasant bits, and gnaw and grind them as they grind the faces of the poor and needy. And, therefore, saith the Wise Man, Prov. xvi. 8. *Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.* And the Psalmist, Ps. xxxvii. 16; *A little, that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.*

[4] Robbery and deceit provoke God to cut men off by some Untimely Stroke and Immature Judgment. And that, either by the hand of human justice with shame and reproach, or of divine justice with wrath and vengeance. For so we find it threatened, Ps. lv. 23; *Thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days:* that is, they shall not lengthen out their days to that period, which the course and strength of nature might seem to promise them; but the hand of God shall cut them off, in the vigour and midst of their flourishing years.

But, howsoever it may fare with them in this life, howsoever they may escape the reproach of men and the sword of justice: yet,

[5] They shall certainly be Eternally Cursed and Eternally Miserable.

Their ill-gotten goods shall not be able to redeem their souls, nor bribe the justice of God, nor give them the least solace and comfort. And what wretched fools are they, who must eternally perish for gaining of things that perish too; and bring everlasting torments upon themselves, for that which before brought them vexations and disquietments! 1 Cor. vi. 10, *Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* Where then shall their portion be, but in that lake, which burneth with fire and brimestone unquenchable? Where the Lord will spoil their very souls; as the Wise Man's expression is, Prov. xxii. 23, *Rob not the poor....For the Lord will plead their cause; and* will *spoil the soul of those, that spoiled them.*

And thus you have seen what various ways God hath threatened, that he will punish this sin.

(4) Before I can proceed farther, here are two Questions to be answered.

[1] Whether, in no case, it be lawful to steal. What if the necessity be so urgent, that I must certainly perish, or else relieve myself by this means?

I say we ought not to do it, in any case: for theft is, in itself, a sin; and there can be no necessity to sin: for every man is bound rather to choose the greatest evil of sufferings, than to commit the least evil of sin.

Indeed, such necessity doth somewhat mitigate the heinousness of the offence: but that is not at all considerable, in the direction of our practice; since it continues a sin still, and deserves eternal damnation. The Wise Man tells us, Prov. vi. 30, 31, *Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;* but this must be understood only comparatively, viz., that the reproach and infamy, which attend such a one, are not so great as that of an adulterer; as it appears ver. 32 : as if he should say, "To be an adulterer, is a far fouler reproach than to be a needy thief." Yet he adds, *If he be found, he shall restore sevenfold: he shall give all the substance of his house:* that is, though his necessity and hunger may take off somewhat from the shame: yet it shall not from the punishment of his offence; but he shall restore that, which he hath stolen, sevenfold. Not that the restitution should be seven times as much as the theft; for the utmost that the law requires was but a fivefold restitution, Exod. xxii. 1: but, as the word sevenfold is most frequently used in Scripture, to signify that, which is complete and perfect; so is it here: *he shall restore sevenfold*; that is, he shall make a full and satisfactory restitution.

Since, therefore, the punishment of theft shall not be relaxed upon the plea of indigence and necessity, it is apparent, that necessity cannot justify any from the guilt of theft.

And, therefore let your wants be what they will or can be, you ought not to supply them by any such wicked and unlawful courses, whatever Aquinas says to the contrary.* If God hath given thee strength and ability, thou oughtest to labour; and to use thine honest industry to procure necessaries: if not, thou oughtest to implore the charity and benevolence of others, whose hearts God may open to thy relief. Or, if thou shouldst meet with such cruel Diveses, who will contribute nothing to thy support, thou oughtest rather, with godly Lazarus, to die in thine integrity, than to steal anything from them: which, although it be their superfluity; yet it is not thy right, without their donation.

And this is in answer to the First Question.

* 22. de q. 66. Art. 7.

[2] What we shall judge of the Israelites spoiling the Egyptians of their jewels: of which we read, Exod. xii. 35, 36.

I answer: In this action there was no theft committed. For,

1st. The supreme dominion of all things is the Lord's; and he may justly transfer the right and property, where he pleaseth.

Now they were commanded by the Lord to take these things of the Egyptians: and, therefore, they were rightfully their own; being made so by him, who hath the sovereign power of all things, both in heaven and earth.*

2dly. These things, which they thus took, might be well considered in lieu of their wages, which were not given them for their long service in Egypt.

And, therefore, it was but righteous in God to consign over these riches of the Egyptians to the Israelites, as a reward for their tedious servitude. Now those, who, by the command of the Supreme Lord of All, take that which is but a due reward for their labour, cannot certainly be condemned as guilty of theft. And this, it seems, was their plea, when, in the time of Alexander the Great, so many ages after the thing was done, the Egyptians sued the Jews by a juridical process, to recover what was taken from them.† But,

3dly. This example is extraordinary and special; and not to be pleaded, nor introduced into practice.

For certain it is, that they had a most express command from God to spoil the Egyptians. But whosoever shall pretend any such warrant now, by relation or the impulse of his private spirit, may well be censured for enthusiasm, and condemned for robbery.

And thus I have done with the first and greatest kind of theft; taking away what rightfully belongs to another, whether God or man.

2. Another kind of theft is, *Oppression, and Unreasonable Exaction.*

And this, especially, is the sin of superiors towards their inferiors; taking advantage, either upon their weakness or their necessity, to impose most unequal conditions upon them; and such, as they cannot bear without their detriment or ruin; contrary to that law, which God gave unto his people, Lev. xxv. 14; *If you sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought* at *thy neighbour's hand; ye shall not oppress one another.* Thus, those, who set their lands to the sweat

* Altisiodor. l. iii. Tract. 7. Q. 6. Ὢν παρα παντα τον χρονον ὑπερωτησαν τοις Αιγυπτιοις πισδον αναγκαιον κομιζομενοι. Clem. Alex. Strom. l. i.

† Jun. Gerson, in Talmud. German. *Reposcunt Ægyptii de Hebræis vasa aurea & argentea. Contrà, Hebræi mutuas petitiones instituant, allegantes sibi quoque eorundem patrum nomine, ex eodem scripturæ instrumento mercedes, restitui illius operariæ servitutis, pro laterinis deductis, pro civitatibus, & villis ædificatis.* Tertull. contra Marcion. l. ii.

and toil of others at too hard a rate, so that the laborious tenant cannot subsist by his industry; those, that let out money at a biting interest, or rigidly exact it from insufficient persons; great ones, who fright the meaner into disadvantageous bargains, and force them, through fear, to part with what they enjoy, at an under-price: these, and other like, though they may not be condemned by human laws, which give too much permission to men to make the utmost advantage of their own; yet they are guilty by the Law of God, and their sin is no less than oppression; which is a sin hateful, both to God and man. The prophet Micah, chap. iii. 2, 3, calls it a plucking *off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;* and chopping *them in pieces as for the pot,* and *as flesh* for *the caldron.* All unmercifulness, and hard dealings with others, are a kind of theft: for the Law of Nature, and much more the Law of Charity, binds thee so to deal with others, that they may have no cause to complain of thee to God; and, in the bitterness of their spirits, to imprecate his wrath and vengeance upon thee.

3. Another kind of theft is, *detaining from another what is his due, either by equity or compact.*

And how many are there, whose profuse riot and luxury are maintained upon the intrusted goods of others; whilst the poor creditor, in the mean time, hath no other satisfaction but good words, and scarce any thing to live upon but his own tears and sighs! And how many withhold the hire of the labourer; who, when he hath wearied out himself in their service, is denied that small reward, which he requires for his necessary refreshment! Yea, not only denying it, but even deferring it beyond the time that they can conveniently be without it, is a kind of theft and oppression: Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; *Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant, that is poor and needy.... At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.* Yea, in all our bargains and agreements, though they be never so much to thine own prejudice, thou art bound to stand to them, unless the other will voluntarily release thee from the obligation: for this is one of the characters given of a godly person, Ps. xv. 4; *He, that sweareth,* and convenanteth *to his own hurt, and changeth not;* but, upon demand, is ready and willing to fulfil his agreement. How much more heinous and abominable is it, when men have already received the full value of their compact, unjustly to withhold what they have agreed to give! which is no better, than to take their labour or their goods from them, by violence and robbery; yea, and in one respect worse, inasmuch as it adds falsehood to stealth.

4. Another kind of theft is, *in buying and selling.*

And this is a very large and voluminous deceit: for the subtleth of men hath found out so many artifices to defraud and overreach one another, that, to recount them, is almost as hard as to escape them. Here come in the false weights and the false measures, which are an *abomination to the Lord,* Prov. xi. 1: false and counterfeited wares; overcommending or undervaluing of goods, for advantage; and many other unjust contrivances, which men's consciences can better suggest to them, than any discourse. The Apostle hath sufficiently cautioned and threatened such men: 1 Thess. iv. 6, Let *no man go beyond* or *defraud his brother, in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such.* Believe it; there is a day coming, when the weights shall be themselves weighed, and the scanty measures measured, by a standard that is infallibly true. Possibly, thou mayest deal so cunningly, that those, whom thou overreachest, can have no advantage against thee, nor right themselves by law; but, remember that the Great Judge will avenge them upon thee, at the Last Day. Then all accounts shall be balanced, and so much found resting due, which thou shalt certainly pay: though not to those, whom thou hast wronged; yet to the justice of God, who is the great and universal creditor.

5. There are, likewise, *many other kinds of theft:* as prodigality, in wasting what should satisfy the just demands of others; taking, of wages and reward, for what we do not endeavour conscientiously to perform; selling that, which we have no right to dispose of, or things, which ought not to be sold; taking bribes for justice, or rewards for injustice. But I shall not particularly insist upon these, and many others, that might be mentioned.

And thus we have seen what the Negative Part of this Precept is.

II. But, because every negative implies in it a positive, let us see what is the duty REQUIRED from us. And that is twofold. That every one of us should have some calling. That all of us should be contented in that estate and condition of life, wherein the Divine Providence hath set us.

i. *Thou shalt not steal:* therefore, EVERY MAN OUGHT TO HAVE A CALLING, whereon he may comfortably subsist; and wherein, by his labour and industry, he may provide at least necessaries for himself and family. For, *he that provideth not for his* family, *hath denied the faith,* saith the Apostle, *and is worse than an infidel.*

1. Some there are, *who live without any calling at all.*

Such are like idle drones, that consume the labour of others; lazy vagabonds, to whom the greatest charity would be correction;

who only serve to devour misplaced alms, and defraud the truly poor of their relief. Yea, if I should rank with these a company of superfluous debauched gentlemen, I think I should do them no great injury: such, I mean, who are neither serviceable to God, nor their country; who have nothing of true worth and gentility in them, but are a company of lewd and desperate roysters, the most unprofitable members in the commonwealth, and good for nothing but to kill and destroy one another in their drunken quarrels. I know there is no necessity for manual employment and labour, to those, whom God hath liberally endowed with his earthly blessings: but yet they may have a calling; and, within their own sphere, may find employment enough to take up their time and thoughts; and such, as may make them the most beneficial men on earth, and truly honoured and loved by others: for by their authority, their example, the ampleness of their demesnes and revenues, and the dependence that others have upon them, they may be as influential to promote goodness and virtue, as too commonly they are to promote vice and villainy: and to such truly generous spirits, who intend to be so employed, let me commend the careful perusal of an excellent treatise directed unto them, entitled, "The Gentleman's Calling." But yet, withal, if they should condescend to some stated vocation and course of life, it would be no disparagement to their gentility: for, certainly, Adam was as much a gentleman, and had as large demesnes as any of them; and yet God thought fit to place him in Eden, that he might dress and keep the garden. But as some have no employment; so,

2. Others, *have an unlawful employment.*

Such, whose only work it is to instruct in vice, and excite men to it. And how many such are there, who live by the provoking and encouraging the wickedness of others; and continually make use of all the allurements, that might entice unto evil; and recommend debauchery, first to the fancy, and then to the will and affections!

3. Others have, indeed, an honest and a lawful calling; but they are *negligent and slothful* in it.

Now sloth tendeth to poverty: Prov. vi. 10, 11; *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth;* drawing nearer and nearer to thee by soft and silent degrees: *and thy want as an armed man;* who, though his pace be slow, by reason of the weight of his armour, yet his assaults are more irresistible and destructive. And poverty tempts to theft: Prov. xxx. 9; *Lest I be poor, and steal.* And, therefore

this command, which forbids theft, must, by consequence, enjoin labour and industry in those lawful callings, wherein the Divine Providence hath set us: according to that of the Apostle, Eph. iv. 28; *Let him, that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour: working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth;* and so, by his industry, of a thief become a benefactor and alms-giver.

ii. It requires us to be CONTENTED WITH THAT PORTION OF EARTHLY COMFORTS, WHICH OUR HEAVENLY FATHER ALLOTS UNTO US.

Heb. xiii. 5; *Be content with* those *things ye have.* And, certainly, he, that is not content with what God allows him, lies under a grievous temptation, by fraudulent and unjust causes to carve out his own condition to himself, and to invade the rights and properties of others.*

Let us, therefore, check this repining temper betimes; and not think that we have too little, and others too much: but whatsoever God affordeth us, let us account it sufficient provision and a child's portion; and, although it be but food and raiment, neither the most delicate nor the most sumptuous, yet, *having food and raiment, let us be therewith content;* as the Apostle exhorts us: 1. Tim. vi. 8. Let us look upon all other things, as superfluous or indifferent; and not murmur, although we should never obtain them: for, whatsoever is needful to thy subsistence, God's providence and blessing upon thy industry will furnish thee with; and, what is not needful to this, is not worth thy envy and repining.

And, so much, for the Exposition of this Commandment.

III. I shall only subjoin a word or two unto those, who are CONSCIOUS TO THEMSELVES, THAT THEY HAVE WRONGED OTHERS of what was their due, or either withheld or taken from them what by law and equity belonged to them.

Let such know, that they are bound to make them a perfect and plenary satisfaction, by making an entire and plenary restitution; if the thing they have stolen or purloined, be still extant and in their hand: or, if not; then by making a full and satisfactory compensation. Yet, be the thing great or small, more or less; though it should seemingly tend to the loss of thy credit, by acknowledging such a wrong; or visibly tend to thy impoverishing or undoing to restore it: yet, notwithstanding, thou art bound to restore every farthing of that, of which thou hast wronged and defrauded thy brother. Nor is it enough to confess the sin before God, and to

* Discontent and covetousness are the root of all injustice. He, that thinks himself wronged, that he hath not as much as some others, will be apt, either through fraud or violence, to increase his own by wronging of others.

beg pardon at his hands: but thou must likewise render unto man, what is his due, and what thou unjustly keepest from him, whether it be his by thy promise or by his own former possession, as ever thou hopest to obtain pardon for thy sin from the mercy of God: yea, and thou art bound likewise, to the very utmost of thy power to make him recompense, for all the damage which he hath, in the mean time, sustained by thy unjust withholding of his right and due from him; or, else, thou shalt never obtain pardon and remission for thy guilt.* And the reason is, because, as long as you detain what is another's, so long you continue in the commission of the same sin; for unjust possession is a continued and prolonged theft: and, certainly, repentance can never be true nor sincere, while we continue in the sin of which we seem to repent; and, thy repentance not being true, pardon shall never be granted thee.

But, you will say, "What if those, whom we have wronged, be since dead? How can restitution be made unto them?"

I answer: In this case, thou art bound to make it to their children, or their near relations; to whom it is to be supposed, that what thou hast wrongfully detained, would have descended, and been left by them. Or, if none of these can be found, nor any to whom of right it may belong, then God's right takes place, as he is the great Lord and Proprietor of All Things: and thou oughtest, besides what thou art obliged to give of thine own, to bestow it on the works of charity and piety; for it is then escheated to him. Yet, withal, thou hast great reason to bewail, that thou hast so long deferred the restitution of it to the right owner, till now thou hast made thyself incapable of doing it.

This, possibly, may seem a hard lesson; and, doubtless it is so, in a world so full of rapine and injustice: but yet, as hard as it is, this is the Rule of Christianity: this is the inflexible law of justice; and, without this, you live and die without all hopes of obtaining pardon, by continuing in your sins impenitently.

And, thus much for the Eighth Commandment.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

The former Commandment provideth for the security of every man's Property, that he may suffer no wrong nor detriment in his goods. This, which I have now read unto you, provides for the preservation of his Good Name, which is a much dearer possession.

* *Si res aliena, propter quam peccatum est, reddi possit, et non redditur, pœnitentia non agitur, sed simulatur: non remittetur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum.* Aug. Ep. ad Macedonium 54.

For, *A good name,* saith the Wise Man, Prov. xxii. i. *is rather to be chosen than great riches:* and therefore it ought to be kept by us, although not delicately and nicely; yet tenderly, and with respect. Whoso contemns fame, will soon prostitute virtue; and those, who care not what others say, will shortly arrive to that impudence of sinning, as not to care what they themselves do.

Indeed, a good name is so excellent a blessing, that there is but one thing to be preferred before it; and this is, a good conscience. When these two stand in competition, credit must give place to duty: and, in this case, it is far better to lose our repute with men, than our acceptance and reward with God. It oftentimes so happens, through the ignorance and general corruption of mankind, that what is honest, and pure, and just, is not yet of good report amongst them: piety is but affectation; strictness of life, a peevish hyprocrisy; the cross, a scandal; Christ himself, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners; his doctrine, heresy; and his miracles, impostures. And if thou lightest upon any such froward and perverse censurers, as too many such there are in all ages, *who think it strange,* as the Apostle speaks, *that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:* seek not, by any base and sinful compliance, to redeem their good opinion: but rather glory in the testimony of their railing, and account all their reviling speeches to be but so many votes for your blessedness: Mat. v. 11, *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall speak all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*

Never covet a good name by bad actions. For what will all the concurring applause of the whole world signify unto thee, if yet thy conscience condemn thee louder than they can extol thee? This is but to have music at the door, when all the while there is chiding and brawling within. It is far better that others should wound thy credit, than thou thy conscience. That is a wound, which their tongues can never lick whole again. All the reputation thy popular sinning can bring thee, will be but like hanging bells at a horse's ears, when all the while his back is galled with his burthen. Whosoever will be a christian must resolve to go through bad report, as well as good: he should desire the one, but not anxiously refuse the other. And, if any will bespatter him, let him be careful, that it be only with their own dirt, and not with his; with their own malice, and not his miscarriages: And, whilst he thus keeps his conscience clear, he may be assured that his credit shall be cleared up at that day, when all their unjust reproaches shall but add a crown and diadem of glory to his head.

But, where a good name is consistent with a good conscience, we ought to prize and value it as one of the choicest of God's blessings in this world, and to use all lawful means to preserve it.

For, First. This will render a man more serviceable to God; and the fitter instrument to promote his honour and glory in the world.

And, therefore, the Wise Man, Eccl. vii. 1, compares *a good name* to *precious ointment;* and, in the comparison, gives it the preference. For, as precious ointment diffuses its fragrancy through the room where it is poured forth, and affects all that are in it with its delightful scent: so do men's gifts, when they are perfumed with a good name, delight and attract others; and, by a sweet and powerful charm, allure them to imitate and practise those virtues, which they see so recommendable. And, therefore, we find it the Apostle's care, 2 Cor. vi. 3, to give *no offence in anything, that the ministry* might *not be blamed.* Though it be our great folly to estimate men's counsels by their own practice; since a diseased physician may prescribe a wholesome medicine: yet so it comes to pass, whether through the curse of God or the prejudice of men, that those, who have lost their credit, have, together with it, lost all opportunities and advantages of doing good in the world: let their parts be never so flourishing, and their gifts never so eminent; yet, if once this dead fly be gotten into this box of ointment, it will corrupt it, and render it unsavoury to all. And the Devil hath no such policy to make the gifts of those whom he fears might shake his kingdom unuseful, as either to tempt them to the commission of some infamous and scandalous sin, or to tempt others falsely to calumniate and report such profligate crimes concerning them: for then he knows such an one is disarmed, and made unserviceable; and, if he can but once blast the leaves, the fruit will seldom come to any maturity and perfection. And, therefore, as you desire to be serviceable to God in promoting his glory, and to the world in promoting their good and benefit, which is the great end of our being, and the only thing worth living for; so, endeavour, by all wise and honest means, to keep up your good name. Be good, and appear to be so. *Let your light so shine before men, that they* seeing *your good works,* may *glorify your Father which is in heaven:* Matt. v. 16.

Secondly. A good name, as it gives us advantage of doing good to others, so it lays an obligation upon us of being good ourselves.

For, if the world be so kindly mistaken, as to report well of us without any desert; yet this cannot but work upon us, if we have any ingenuity, and engage us to deserve it: so, happily turn that, which was praise, into motive. Or, if they give us but our due

commendation, and our virtue justly challengeth this fame: yet still it will engage us to do things worthy ourselves, and worthy that common estimate that men put upon us; that we may not fall short of what we have been, or what they still repute us to be. This is a laudable ambition, which seeks by virtue to maintain that credit, which by virtue we have acquired. And, doubtless, when other arguments have been baffled by a temptation, this hath been a sheet anchor to the soul; and hath often held it in the greatest storms, when the wind and waves have beat most furiously against it: "Should I consent to this sin, what a blot and dishonour should I get to myself! How should I be able to look good men in the face again? Would not this sin brand me for a hypocrite in their esteem? Would they ever look upon me, or receive me with affection, after this fall? Should I not carry the disgrace and scar of this wound visibly upon me to my grave? No, one sin shall never ruin all the comfort and all the repute of so many years' piety: and I, who have been so long noted and exemplary for holiness, will not by this one fact make myself a scorn to the wicked, and a shame to the godly." And, by these considerations, he rejects a temptation, that perhaps ran down all other considerations before it. But a man of a lost and desperate credit sins impudently, without any such restraint upon him: he thinks it is but in vain for him to abstain from any wickedness; for, whether he doth or not, people will still believe him guilty; his credit is so disfigured and his name so infamous, that he thinks he cannot be worse than he is already reported; and so rubs his forehead, and out faces censure, and with a brazen impudence cares not how wicked he is, nor how many know him to be so.

Thus you have see how cautious we ought to be, in maintaining our own good name.

But this Command requires us also, to preserve the repute and good name of others, as well as our own.

And it forbids, The sin of Lying; Detraction and Slander; Base Soothing, and unworthy Flattery.

I. This Command prohibits LYING.

A sin, that comprehends under it all other violations of this precept: for Slander and Flattery are both of them lies, different only in manner and circumstance.

And, as it is a sin large and comprehensive, in its nature; so it is general and universal, in its practice. We may well complain with the holy Prophet, that *Truth is perished from the earth.*

i. Here I shall, first, show you WHAT A LIE IS: and, then, the Heinousness and Aggravation of this common sin.

1. A Lie, according to St. Austin's* definition of it, is *a voluntary speaking of an untruth, with an intent to deceive.*

And therefore, in a Lie there must be these Three Ingredients. There must be the speaking of an untruth. It must be known to us to be an untruth, and a falsehood. And, it must be with a will and intent to deceive him, to whom we speak it, and to lead him into error.

2. And, therefore, (1) Parables and Figurative Speeches are no Lies. For neither, as to the drift and scope of them, are they falsehoods: nor yet are they spoken with an intent to deceive, but rather to instruct the hearers: and so have neither the matter, nor the form of a lie.

The Scripture abounds with these Tropical Expressions, which, although in the proper signification of the words, they cannot be verified of the things to which they are applied; yet do very fully agree to them, in the figurative and transferred sense. Thus Jotham's Parable of Trees choosing them a King, was aptly accommodated to that sense, which he meant; and which those, that heard him, well enough understood. And thus our Saviour Christ calls himself a Door; signifying, by that metaphor, that by him alone we must enter into heaven and eternal life: a Vine; signifying, that, without our incision into him and spiritual union unto him whereby we derive grace from his plenitude and fulness of grace, as the branches do sap and juice from the stock, we shall be cast out as withered and fruitless branches, fit for nothing but to be burned. Innumerable other metaphors are every where dispersed up and down in the Scriptures.

And, besides metaphors, the Scripture useth hyperbolies. I shall only instance in that famous one: John xxi. 25; *Many other things Jesus did; the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.* This high expression the Evangelist useth only to exaggerate the number of the miracles and remarkable passages of our Saviour's life; and to signify to us, that he did many other things, which are not upon record.

And sometimes the Scripture useth Ironical Taunts. Thus, in that bitter sarcasm of Elijah to the priests of Baal, 1 Kings xviii. 27; *He mocked them, and said, Cry aloud; for he is a God.* Which kinds of ironical speeches are so far from being intended to create error in the minds of men, or to confirm them in it, that they are spoken on purpose to convince them of their errors, and to make them appear to be shameful and ridiculous; and, therefore, are no lies.

* *Voluntaria falsi enunciatio, fallendi causâ.* Aug. de Mendac. ad Consentium. c. 4.

But here we must take this caution: That, in using such figurative speeches, we ought so to circumstantiate them, that the hearers may easily perceive the drift and scope of our discourses; or, at least, may be assured that we intend some other meaning by them, than what the words do properly and in themselves bear. Otherwise, though it may not be a lie, in us; yet it may be an occasion of error and mistake, in them.

(2) Every falsehood is not a lie.

For, though it hath the matter; yet it may want the form and complement to make it such. For, many times, men do speak and report that, which is not true; which yet they themselves do believe to be true: and so are rather deceived, than deceivers; and perhaps are far from any intention of imposing upon the credulity of others.* Such an one is not so much to be accused of lying, as of folly and rashness; in reporting that for truth, the certainty of which is not clear and evident unto him.

(3) A man may speak that, which is true; and yet be a liar, in so doing. As in these two cases:

[1] When we report that to be a truth, which, although it be so; yet we believe it to be a falsehood, and report it with an intent to deceive those that hear us. Or,

[2] When we report the figurative words of another, leaving out those circumstances, which might make them appear to be figurative. And, therefore, Mat. xxvi. 60, they are called *false witnesses*, which came in against Christ; and testified, that he said, he was *able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it again in three days.* In which, though there were many falsifications of the words of our Saviour; yet had they reported the very words that he spake, they had nevertheless been false witnesses; because, by their testimony, they wrested them to another sense, than what Christ intended by them: for, certainly, he is a liar, who reports my words, with a purpose to beget a wrong construction of them; as much as he, who reports me to have spoken what I never said.

(4) It is no lie to conceal part of the truth, when it is not expedient nor necessary to be known.

Thus, 1 Sam. xvi. 2, God himself instructs Samuel, when he sent him to anoint David king over Israel, that he should answer, he came *to sacrifice to the Lord:* which was truth, and one end of his going into Bethlehem; though he had also another, which he prudently concealed.

* *Vir bonus præstare debet, ne mentiatur; prudens, ne mendacium dicat.* **P. Nigid. apud A. Gell. Noct. At. 3. l. xi. c. 11.**

(5) A man may act contrary to what he before said, if the circumstances of the thing be altered, without being guilty of lying.

We have frequent examples of this in the Scriptures. Thus, Gen. xix. 2, the angels tell Lot, that they would not come into his house; but would *abide in the street all night:* yet, upon his importunity and earnest intreaties, they went in with him. And thus St. Peter, with some heat and vehemency of his humility, refused that Christ should wash his feet: John xiii. 8, *Thou shalt never wash my feet:* but when he was instructed in the significancy of this condescension of our Saviour, not only permits, but intreats him to do it. So, likewise, in all things of such a nature, we may lawfully change our words, upon the change of our minds; and, upon the inducement of some circumstances that were not known or considered by us, we may, without the imputation of lying, do otherwise than we before resolved and declared.

But this must be heedfully cautioned:

[1] That the actions be not such, as we are bound to perform by divine precept. Nor,

[2] Such, as we have bound ourselves unto, by the voluntary obligation of a vow made unto God. Nor,

[3] Such, as our not doing them, or doing otherwise than we have promised, should be hurtful or prejudicial unto others. For if I have promised another that which is beneficial unto him, however I may change my opinion; yet I must not change my purpose: but, unless he will release me, or hath forfeited the benefit of my promise by failing in the conditions of it, I stand engaged to perform what I have plighted unto him.

And thus you see what a lie is, and what is not a lie.

The sum of all I shall contract into this description of it. A Lie is a falsehood, either real or supposed so by us; spoken purposely and with an intention to deceive another. And, therefore, neither falsehoods not thought to be so, nor figurative speeches, nor truth partly concealed, nor the change of our mind and purposes upon the changing and alteration of circumstances, can be chargeable with that foul and scandalous sin of lying.

3. *Lies are usually distinguished into Three Kinds:* The Jocular, Officious, and, Pernicious Lie.

(1) There is a Jocular Lie: a lie, framed to excite mirth and laughter; and to deceive the hearer, only to please and divert him.

Though it may seem very harmless, to deceive men into mirth and recreation: yet truth is such an awful and severe thing, that it ought not to be contradicted; no, not in jest. And God reckons it

up, as a sin, against the Israelites, Hos. vii. 3, and they made *the king and princes glad,* or merry, *with their lies.*

(2) There is an Officious Lie: which is told for another's benefit and advantage; and seems to make an abundant compensation for its falsehood, by its use and profit.

But yet, neither can this excuse it from being a sin: for, since a lie is intrinsically evil in itself, let the advantage that accrues by it be never so great, we ought not to shelter either ourselves or others under that rotten refuge. That stated maxim holds universally true in all cases: We ought not to do evil, that good may come thereof. And, therefore, although thine own life or thy neighbour's depends upon it; yea, put the case it were not only to save his life but to save his soul, couldest thou by this means most eminently advance the glory of God, or the general good and welfare of the Church; yet thou oughtest not to tell the least lie, to promote these great and blessed ends. This the Apostle takes for granted: Rom. iii.7.

Which place, because it may seem, at first glance, somewhat obscure, I shall briefly expound unto you. *If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?* The words, as they lie, seem to be favourable to such a beneficial lie: but if we consider the scope and drift of them, we shall see that they clearly condemn it. For the Apostle had, in the foregoing verses, taught, that the unrighteousness and sins of men did occasionally conduce to the manifestation of the justice and veracity of God, in fulfilling his threatenings upon them. Against this position, he raiseth an objection: verse 5; If the unrighteousness of men commend and illustrate the righteousness of God; how then can God be just, in taking vengeance on those sins by which he is glorified? To this the Apostle answers, two ways:

[1] He abhors the consequence: verse 6; *God forbid,* that we should think him unjust; because he punisheth those sins, which accidentally serve for the manifestation of his glory. For if God were unjust, how then should he judge the world?

[2] He answers, by putting a like case, and giving a like instance: verse 7, *If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie.....why yet am I judged as a sinner?* As if he should say: "By the like reason, as you infer, that it would be unrighteous in God to punish those, who are the occasion of so much glory to him through their sins; by the like, I might infer, that if, by my lie, I might glorify God, I were not to be accounted a sinner for lying." But this, saith he, verse 8, is a most wicked consequence; and such, as would justify the slanders of those, who report that we affirm it lawful,

to do evil, that good may come: whose damnation is just: that is, it is just with God to damn those, who slander us with such a gross untruth; and it is just with God to damn those, who hold so wicked and destructive a doctrine.

So that you see nothing could be more expressly spoken against these officious lies, than what the Apostle here produceth in this place. He asserts, in the general, That we must not do evil, that good may come thereof; and he instanceth, in particular, That we must not lie, although the glory of God may be promoted by it.

(3) There is a Malicious and Pernicious Lie: a lie, devised on purpose for the hurt and damage of my neighbour.

Which is the worst and the most heinous sort of all; and hath nothing, that might excuse or extenuate it. It shows a heart brimfull of the bitterness of malice, when this passion works out at the mouth, in slanderous reports and false accusations. All lies are in themselves sinful; but this is the vilest and most abominable of all.

ii. Now, for the AGGRAVATIONS OF THIS SIN, consider,

1. It is *a sin, that makes you most like unto the Devil.*

The Devil is a spirit; and, therefore, gross carnal sins cannot correspond unto his nature. His sins are more refined and intellectual: such as are pride and malice, deceit and falsehood. John viii. 44, *He is a liar, and the father of it.* And the more of malice goes into the composition of any lie, the more nearly it resembles him. This is the first born of the Devil; the beginning of his strength: for, by lies, he prevailed over wretched man: and therefore it is his darling and beloved sin, and the greatest instrument of promoting his kingdom. It is that, which, in his own mouth ruined all mankind in the gross; when he falsely suggested to our first parents, that they should be as gods: and that, which he still puts into the hearts and mouths of others, to ruin and destroy their souls, and the souls of others: Acts v. 3, *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own,* saith our Saviour. And, certainly, when we speak a lie, we repeat only what he prompts and dictates to us. Thou never liest, but thou speakest aloud, what the Devil whispered softly to thee: the Old Serpent lies folded round in thy heart, and we may hear him hissing in thy voice. And, therefore when God summoned all his heavenly attendance about him, and demanded who would persuade Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead, an evil spirit, that had crowded in amongst them, steps forth and undertakes the office, as his most natural employment, and that wherein he most of all delighted: 1 Kings xxii. 22; *I will go forth, and.... be a lying spirit in*

the mouth of all his prophets. Every lie thou tellest, consider that the Devil sits upon thy tongue, breathes falsehood into thy heart, and forms thy words and accents into deceit.

2. Consider, that it is *a sin most contrary to the nature of God, who is truth itself.*

A sin, that he hates and abominates: Prov. vi. 16, 17, *These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, &c.:* and, Prov. xii. 22, *Lying lips are* an *abomination to the Lord.* And, therefore, we have so many express commands given us against this sin: Lev. xix. 11, *Ye shall not.... deal falsely,* nor *lie one to another:* Col. iii. 9, *Lie not one to another:* Eph. iv. 25, *Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth* to *his neighbour.*

3. Consider, that it is *a sin, that gives in a fearful evidence against us, that we belong to the Devil, and are his children.*

For he is the father of lies, and of liars. God's children will imitate their Heavenly Father, in his truth and veracity. And it is a very observable place, Isa. lxiii. 8, *Surely,* saith God, *they are my people: children, that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.*

4. Consider, *how dreadfully God hath threatened it with eternal death.*

Scarce any one sin more expressly and particularly. Rev. xxii. 15, *Without,* even in outer darkness, *are dogs.... and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth* or *maketh a lie.*

5. A lie *sheweth a most dangerous and cowardly fear of men, and a most daring contempt of the Great God.*

Whosoever lies, doth it out of a base and sordid fear, lest some evil and inconveniency should come unto him, by declaring the truth. And this Montaigne, in his Essays, Lib. ii. c. 18, gives as the reason, why the imputation of lying is the most reproachful ignominy, that one man can lay upon another; and that, which most passionately moves them to revenge: because, saith he, "To say a man lieth, is to say, that he is audacious towards God, and a coward towards men."

6. *Mankind generally account it the most infamous and reproachful sin of all others.*

A liar loseth all credit and reputation amongst men; and he, who hath made himself scandalous by lying, is not believed when he speaks truth. Yea, it is so odious and foul a sin, that we find it generally esteemed worse than any other sin; and the avoiding of this, thought a good excuse for the commission of others: for when men are moved with some violent passion, they oftentimes resolve to do those things, which, when their passion is allayed, they must

look upon as grievous sins; yet, rather than be false to their word, and so censured for lying, they will venture to perpetrate. Thus Herod, for his oath's sake, beheaded John the Baptist. And the common excuse for rash and unwarrantable actions, is, "I said I would do thus or thus; and, therefore, I thought myself bound in honour to do it."

7. It is *a sin, that God will detect; and exposeth those, who are guilty of it, to shame and contempt.*

Prov. xii. 19; *Lying* lips are *but for a moment.* And, when they are found out, as usually they are, by their own forgetfulness and the interfering of their own speeches, how shameful will their sin be to them! And the only reward they shall have for it, is, that those, who have accustomed themselves to lying, shall not be believed when they speak truth.

Thus much, concerning that heinous and odious sin of Lying.

II. There remain two other violations of this Commandment: the one is, by Slander and Detraction: the other, by base Flattery and Soothing. And both these may respect, either ourselves or others.

I shall first speak of that common sin of SLANDER and DETRACTION: a sin, that is reigning and triumphant in this our age; and if I should likewise say, in this place, I think I should not myself be guilty of it, by that censure.

i. Indeed Slander and Detraction seem somewhat to differ. For SLANDER, properly, is A FALSE IMPUTATION OF VICE; but DETRACTION is A CAUSELESS, DIMINISHING REPORT OF VIRTUE. The one traduceth us to be, what, indeed, we are not: the other lessens, what we really are: and both are highly injurious to our good name and reputation, the best and dearest of all our earthly possessions.

When a man's life and actions are so blameless and exemplary, that even malice itself is ashamed to vent its venom by base slanders, lest it should appear to be malice; and the reproach should light rather upon the reporters, than him whom they seek to defame: then it betakes itself to those little sly arts of nibbling at the edges of a man's credit, and clipping away the borders of his good name, that it may not pass so current in the world as before. Thus, when any are so just, as to give others their due commendation either for learning, or wisdom, or piety, or any other perfection either of grace or of nature; you shall have those, who lie in wait to cut off others men's esteem, if they see it so strongly fortified by the conspicuousness of it and the general vote of the world, that they dare not attack the whole, then they lurkingly assault part of it; and what they cannot altogether deny, they will endeavour to diminish:

"It is true, such a man is, as you say, learned and knowing: but, withal, so knowing, as to know that too. He is wise: but his wisdom is rather politic, than generous; and all his designs are biased with self-ends. He is charitable: but his charity seems too indiscreet: or, is such, if you did not proclaim his good works, he himself would. He is pious and devout indeed, poor man, after his way, and according to his knowledge." Thus, by these blind hints, they endeavour, either to find or to make a flaw in another man's repute; well knowing, that a cracked name, like a cracked bell, will not sound half so clear and loud in the ears of the world, as else it might.

Thus you see what Slanders and Detractions are. Now,

1. *A man may be a Self-Slanderer, and a Self-Detracter.*

And such are those who traduce and defame themselves: and either assume to themselves those wickednesses, which they have not committed; or blamably conceal those gifts and excellencies they are endowed with, when they are called to discover them for the glory of God and the public good.

Some slander themselves, out of hope of reward; when they suppose that the crimes they boast of, may be accepted as services, by others. Thus, when Saul had slain himself, an Amalekite falsely reports to David that he had slain him; hoping to obtain a reward from him, for dispatching his enemy.

Sometimes men impiously boast of those sins, which they never did, they never durst commit, merely out of a braving humour of vain-glory; and that, among their debauched companions, they might gain the reputation of valiant and daring sinners.

Others falsely accuse themselves of those sins of which they were never guilty, out of a despairing and dejected spirit. Thus, many a poor soul, that hath laboured under severe convictions, begins first to doubt, and then to conclude, that he hath certainly committed the Unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost: and, in extreme anguish and horror, crieth Guilty; and confesseth the indictment, that is falsely drawn up against him, by the calumny of the Devil and his own black fears and melancholy.

Sometimes, men detract from themselves,* out of a lying and dissembled humanity: making this kind of detraction only a bait for commendation; as knowing the ball will rebound back the farther to them, the harder they strike it from them. This is usually an artifice of proud and arrogant persons; and those, who cannot en-

* Ἡ ὑπερβολη και ἡ λιαν ελλειψις αλκαζονικον. Arist. Eth. l. iv. c. 7.

dure to be contradicted in anything else, would be very loth you should yield to them in this.

And, lastly, others detract from themselves, out of a too bashful modesty; or to avoid some troublesome and unpleasing employments, which they are called unto. Thus we find Moses, Exod. iv. 10, making many excuses, that he was *not eloquent*, but *of a slow tongue*, and *slow of speech;* and all, because he was loth to undertake that difficult and dangerous charge, of bringing out the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt.

All these kinds of self-slander and detraction are evil, and some of them most vile and abominable.

2 There is *a slandering of and detracting from Another;* wronging him unjustly in his fame and reputation, which we ought tenderly to preserve and cherish.

God and nature have entrusted us, mutually, with each other's good name. Thy brother's credit is put as a precious *depositum* into thy hands: and, if thou wickedly lavishest it out, by spreading false rumours of him; or carelessly keepest it, by suffering others to do so, when it is in thy power to justify him; know, assuredly, that it will be strictly required of thee: for, in this respect, every man is his brother's keeper.

This slandering of others, may be either in Judicial Process, or else in Common and ordinary Converse.

(1) In Judicial Process.

And then it is truly and properly False-witnessing: when thou risest up against thy brother in judgment: and attestest that, which thou knowest to be false and forged, or which thou art not most infallibly assured to be true.

And this sin is the most heinous and dreadful, upon the account of Two aggravating Circumstances, that attend it:

[1] Since usually all Actions, in law and judgment, concern either the person or the estate of thy brother, by a false witness thou not only wrongest him in his name and reputation, but in one of these; and so art not only a slanderer, but a thief or murderer.

Prov. xi. 9; *A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour.* And, by so much the more odious is thy crime, in that thou pervertest the law, which was intended to be a fence and safeguard to every man's property, and turnest it against itself, making it the instrument of thy injustice and cruelty. The Psalmist, Psal. lii. 2, compares Doeg's malicious tongue to a sharp razor: and, certainly, when thou givest a false testimony against thy brother, thy tongue is a sharp razor; and it not only wounds his credit, but cuts his throat.

[2] Since, usually, all judicial proceedings exact from the witnesses a tremendous oath solemnly taken by the name of the Great God of Heaven; to give in a false testimony, is not only to be guilty of slander, but of Perjury too.

Yea, and let me add one thing more, to make it a most accumulate wickedness: such a false testimony is not only slander and perjury; but it is Blasphemy too. For what else is it, but to bring the Most Holy God, who is Eternal Truth, to confirm a falsehood and a lie? What can be a higher affront to his Most Sacred Majesty, than this? for a sworn witness is therefore accepted, because he brings God in to be a witness too. And wilt not thou tremble, O wretch, to cite God to appear a witness to that, which a thousand witnesses within thee, (I mean thy own conscience,) do all depose to be false and forged: and so, to transfer thy injustice, and rapine, and bloody murder upon him; and shelter them all, under the shadow of his veracity and faithfulness?

You see, then, how horrid an impiety this is: and, yet, how common, not only those who by this wicked means suffer wrong, but others who are conversant in such judiciary trials, do too truly report.

May it please God to put it into the hearts of our rulers, to enact more severe and rigorous laws against those, who are found guilty, of it! It is sad to think, that, whereas a thief shall be adjudged to death for stealing some petty inconsiderable matter, and perhaps too for the relief of his pressing necessities; yet two villains, that have conspired together, by false accusations and perjured testimonies, to take away a man's whole estate or possibly his life, should, for these far greater crimes, be sentenced to so easy a punishment, that only shame and reproach make up the severest part of it. Certainly, I think, it were but just, that the least they should suffer should be a retaliation of their intended mischiefs: and that the same they designed against their brother should be inflicted upon themselves; whether it be loss of life, or loss of goods and estate. It is, but all equity, that the complotters and artificers of mischief should perish by their own craft. And, if this rigour and wholesome severity were but once used, we should not have so many oaths set out to hire, nor would any make it a trade to be a witness: but innocency would be secured under the protection of the laws; and the laws themselves be innocent of the ruin of many hundreds, who by this means, fall into the snares of ungodly men. Of this one thing I am sure, that God himself thought it a most equitable law, when he thus provided for the safety of his people Israel: Deut. xix. 18, 19, 20; *If the witness be a false witness,* and testify *falsely*

against his brother, then shall he do unto him, as he had thought to do *unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil way from among you; And those, which remain, shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.*

(2) There is a slandering of others in our Common and Ordinary Converse. And this is done Two Ways. Either,

[1] Openly and avowedly; in their presence, and to their faces. And that is also twofold. Either,

1st. By reviling and railing speeches.

And, thus, Shimei barked at David: 2 Sam. xvi. 7; *Come out thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial.* And I wish that our streets and houses did not, to their great disgrace and reproach, echo with such clamour; and that too many did not rake together all the dirty expressions which their wit and malice will serve them to invent, only to throw into one another's faces. A sin, which as it is sordid and base in itself; so it chiefly reigns among those, who are of a mean condition. But, wheresoever it be found, it is a disparagement to human nature, a sin against civil society, and argues men guilty of much folly and brutishness; and, I am sure, it is a transgression of that express command of the Apostle, Eph. iv. 31, 32; *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted; forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

2dly. But then there is another way of open, avowed slander: and that is, by bitter taunts and sarcastical scoffs.

And this is usually an applauded sin, among the more refined sort of men; who take a pride and glory in exposing others, and making them ridiculous: thinking their own wit never looks so beautiful, as when it is dyed in other's blushes. But this is a most scurrilous and offensive way: wherein, certainly, he hath the most advantage, not who hath most wit, but that hath least modesty. These kinds of tauntings are sometimes such, as the Apostle calls *cruel mockings;* and reckons up as one part of those persecutions, which the Primitive Christians endured: Heb. xi. 36, *Others had trial of cruel mockings.* As Nero, for his barbarous sport, wrapped up the Christians in beasts' skins, and then set dogs to worry them: so these disguise their brethren in false and antic shapes; and then fall upon them, and bait them.

[2] There is a more secret and sly conveyance of slander: and that is, by backbiting, whispering, and carrying up and down of tales.

Like those busy tongues, Jer. xx. 10, that would fain find or make themselves some employment; saying, *Report, and we will report.* And, so, a false and slanderous rumour shall, like the river Nilus, spread over the whole land; and yet the head of it be never known: it shall pass on, to the indelible blot and infamy of thy neighbour; and the first author of it lie hid and concealed in the crowd, as some fishes will in the mud, which they themselves have stirred. Against this sort of men, Solomon, in his book of Proverbs, is very severe: and there is no one wickedness, which that excellent compendium of wisdom and morality doth more inveigh against, than this of whispering about another man's disgrace: Prov. xviii. 8, *The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.* And this he repeats again, chap. xxvi. 22, intimating to us, that the wound, which such a tongue makes, is deep, but yet hid and secret, and therefore the more incurable. And, Prov, xvi. 28, *A whisperer separateth chief friends.* He is, as it were the Devil's trucheman and interpreter between them both: and goeth to one, and buzzeth in his ear what such an one said of him, although perhaps it be altogether false; and, when he hath by this means got some angry and choleric speeches from him, goes and reports them back to the other; and so, by his wicked breath, blows up the coals of strife and dissension between them. And, therefore, the Wise Man tells us, Prov. xxvi. 20, *Where no wood is, the fire goeth out; so, where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth.* The Apostle cautions the Corinthians against this sin: 2 Cor. xii. 20, *I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would.... lest there be among you debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:* and he reckons it up among the black catalogue of those crimes, for the which *God gave* up the heathen *to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient: Being filled with all unrighteousness... full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers; Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things:* Rom. i. 28, 29, 30. Now one of the chief artifices of this sort of men, is to calumniate strenuously, according to that old maxim of the Devil; *Calumniare fortiter, & aliquid adhærebit,* "Slander stoutly, and somewhat will stick behind:" for, though the wound may possibly be healed, yet the scar will still remain; and be a blemish to a man's reputation, as long as he lives.

But, then, again there is another kind of slander and detraction: and that is, when a man divulgeth those imperfections and faults, which are truly in his neighbour, without being called or necessitated to do it. For, sometimes, truth itself may be a slander; when it is spoken with an evil design to the hurt and prejudice of another.

Indeed, if thou be duly called to witness in judgment: or, if it be in thine own defence and vindication; when, if thou dost not discover him that is guilty, thou thyself mayst be supposed to be the person: or, if the crime be such, as ought not to escape unpunished: or, if he remain contumacious, after more private admonition; in which case, our Saviour commands us to tell the Church: or, lastly, when it is for the safety and security of another, who might else be wronged, should we conceal from him the mischiefs, which others intend him: in these cases, it is both lawful and expedient to make known the faults of thy brother.

But, then, be sure that thou do it, not with any secret delight and exultation, that thou hast his credit to trample upon, to raise thine own the higher; but with that true grief and sorrow of heart, that may evince to all the world, that nothing, but conscience and a sense of thy duty, enforced thee to publish his shame, which thou shouldst be willing to hide at the price of anything, but sin and thine own shame.

But, alas! it is strange to consider the depravity of our nature, how we delight in other men's sins, and are secretly glad when their miscarriages give us an occasion to reproach and disgrace them. How many are big with such stuff; and go in pain, till they have disburthened themselves into the ears of others! And some are such ill dissemblers of their joy, that they do it with open scorn and derision. Others are more artificially malicious; and, with a deep sigh, and a downcast look, and a whining voice, and an affected slowness, whisper to one: "Alas! did you not hear of such a gross miscarriage by such a one?" and then whisper the same thing to another, and a third; and, when they have made it as public as they can, hypocritically desire every one to keep it secret; for that they would be loth their neighbour should come to any disgrace and trouble about it. Believe it, Sirs, this, though the matter you report be never so true, is nothing else but slander: because it is done to no good end, but only to feed your own malice; and, like flies, to lie sucking the galled backs and sores of others. And, therefore, we find that Doeg, though he told nothing but the truth, 1 Sam. xxii. 9, 10, yet is by David challenged as a liar and slanderer: Ps. lii. And thus you have seen what this sin of Slander is.

ii. I shall FINISH this subject, with giving you,

1. Some brief *Rules and Directions, which, through the grace of God, may be serviceable to keep you from this common sin.*

And, then, show you how you ought to demean yourselves under the lash of other men's slanderous tongues.

(1) If thou wouldst keep thyself from being a slanderer of others, addict not thyself violently to any one party or persuasion of men.

For, part-taking will beget prejudice; and prejudice is the jaundice of the soul, which represents other men and their actions, in the colour which our own disease puts upon them. And, indeed, we have all generally such a good conceit of ourselves, that it is a very hard and difficult matter, to have a good esteem for others, who are not of our judgment and of our way. And this makes us, first, very willing to hear some evil of them: for, because we think that what we do is good, we cannot cordially think them good, who do not judge and act as we ourselves do; and so our minds are prepared to entertain reports against them from others, and then to spread them abroad ourselves. And I cannot but impute to this the great uncharitableness of our days; wherein love and brotherly kindness lie murdered under the violence of different persuasions, and different modes, and divers ways of worshipping one and the same God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, all those lying rumors and lying wonders, that one party invents to beat down the other, One party reports the other, to be all profane and superstitious; and the other reports its opposite, to be all hypocritical and seditious: and both suffer from each others' envenomed tongues; and, between both, truth suffers, and charity perishes, and is utterly lost. For shame, O Christians! Is this the way to promote God's cause, or Christ's kingdom? Doth He or It stand in need of your lies? Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him? Shall his honour be maintained by the Devil's inventions? I shall not speak partially; but wheresoever the fault lies, there let this censure fall: That it is certainly a very strong presumption of a very weak and bad cause, when the refuge and support of it are lies.

(2) If thou wouldst not be guilty of slander, be not busy in other men's affairs.

Keep thine eyes within doors, and thy thoughts at home. Enquire not what others say, nor what others do; but look to thine own affairs; and guide them with discretion. Thou hast work enough at home, within thine own heart, and in thine own house; and, if thou art careful to manage that well, thou wilt scarcely have either time or inclination to receive or divulge bad reports of others. And, thererore, the Apostle joins idleness, pragmaticalness, and tattling together: 1 Tim. v. 13; *They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.* They are *idle*, and yet *busy-bodies;* very idly busy: who, because they care not to employ their

hands, set their tongues on work; and suffer them to walk through the world, abusing and lashing every one they meet. A true description of a company of giddy flies in our times, that are always roving from house to house, and skipping about, now to this man's ear and by and by to that, and buzzing reports of what ill they have heard or observed of others.

(3) Take another rule. If thou wouldst not be guilty of slander, be frequent in reflecting upon thine own miscarriages; or thy proneness to fall into the same, or greater faults.

When thou hearest or knowest of any foul and scandalous sin committed by another, look backwards upon thine own life and actions. Canst thou find no blots in thy copy? Is the whole course of thy life fair written upon thy conscience? If not, how canst thou with any shame and modesty upbraid thy brother with his miscarriages, when thou thyself hast been guilty of the like, or greater? Or, *why*, O Hypocrite, *beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye*, and seest *not the beam that is in thine own?* Methinks, our shame for our own sins should be a covering to our brother's; and, when we ourselves are guilty, we should not be so malicious nor foolish, as to reproach ourselves, by reproaching him: otherwise, to eclipse and darken his good name, is but as when the moon eclipses the sun; her own darkness and obscurity is made the more remarkable by it.

Or, if God, by his restraining grace, hath kept thee from those wickednesses, into which he hath suffered others to fall; yet, then, look inward: view and search thine own heart: ransack over thy corrupted nature; and there thou shalt find those, yea and far greater abominations than those, like beds of twisted serpents, knotting and crawling within thee. Say, with thyself, "How can I reproach him, who hath but copied forth mine own nature? How can I expose his infamy, who hath but done what I have much ado to keep myself from doing? Possibly the same temptation might have prevailed over me too, had God let it loose upon me. I owe my preservation, not to any difference that was between us, but only to the free and arbitrary grace of God: by this it is that I stand; and shall I reproach him for falling, who should also myself have fallen, were I not strongly upheld by another?" Thus, I say, by reflecting on ourselves, we shall be withheld from being injurious, in our censures and in our reports of others: we shall hardly divulge their real miscarriages; much less accuse and slander them with false and forged ones. This is the Apostle's rule: Gal. vi. 1; *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye, which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

If you would not be guilty of slander, listen not unto those, who are slanderers and detractors.

Lend not your ears to those, who go about with tales and whispers; whose idle business it is, to tell news of this man and the other: for if these kinds of flies can but blow in your ears, the worms will certainly creep out at your mouths. For all discourse is kept up by exchange; and, if he bring thee one story, thou wilt think it incivility not to repay him with another for it: and, so they chat over the whole neighborhood; accuse this man, and condemn another, and suspect a third, and speak evil of all. I wish that the most of our converse were not taken up this way, in recounting stories of what passed between such and such, when all is to no other end, but to bring an evil report upon them. Now if any such backbiters haunt thee, who make it their trade to run up and down with tales and news, give them no countenance, listen not to their detractions; but rather sharply rebuke them, and silence their slanderous tongues: and this will either drive the slander from them, or the slander from thee: Prov. xxv. 23: *The north wind driveth away rain; so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.*

(5) If you would not be slanderers of others, be not self lovers.

For self-love always causeth envy; and envy detraction. An envious man cannot endure another's praise; and, therefore, seeketh all he can to blast it, by false reports and lying slanders: as if all, that were detracted from another, were added to his own reputation. When his neighbor's fame begins to grow tall, and to spread about him, he then seeks, what he can, to cut it down; because he thinks it hinders his prospect, and the world cannot take so fair a view of him as he desires: and, therefore, he is still hewing at it; sometimes with oblique, and sometimes with direct blows; sometimes striking at his parts, and sometimes at his piety: and, if he can but make these fall in the esteem of the world, then he thinks none shall be so much respected and honoured as himself. A man, that is a self-lover, thinks all due unto himself: all praise and commendation must run in his channel, or else it takes a wrong course; and he accounts just so much taken from him, as is ascribed to another: and this puts him upon this base art of detraction, that, by depressing others, he may advance himself, and raise the structure of his own fame upon the ruins of his neighbour's. And, therefore, if thou wouldst not slander others, be sure do not too much admire thyself. For self-applause, and self-esteem, is like a pike in a pond, that will eat up and devour all about it, that itself may thrive and grow upon them.

(6) Be not too easy and facile to entertain suspicious and evil surmises against others.

For, if thou begin to suspect evil of another, the next thing is to conclude it, and the next to report it. This suspicion is a strange shadow, that every action of another will cast upon our minds; especially, if we be beforehand a little disaffected towards them. Thus, very dreams increased suspicion against Joseph in his brethren And, if once a man be out of esteem with us, let him then do what he will, be it never so virtuous and commendable, suspicion will still be the interpreter: and, where suspicion is the interpreter of men's actions, slander and detraction will be the gloss and comment upon them. Indeed, suspicion is always too hasty in concluding: and, many times, our jealousies and distrusts, upon very small occasions, prompt us to conclude that what we have thus surmised is certainly come to pass; and so we take shadows for enemies, and report that confidently for truth, which yet we never saw acted, but only in our own fancies.

Now, notwithstanding that this sin of slander and detraction is so great and heinous: yet may it not be justly feared, that many place their whole religion in it; and think themselves so much the better, by how much the worse they think and report of other men? Do they not think it a piece of zeal and warmth for the worship and service of God, to cry down all as superstitious, that do not worship him in their way? Do they not make it, if not a part, yet a sign of holiness, to be still finding faults, and crying out against others; to be censorious and clamorous?

Such a sort of men are all lewd and profane: and such a sort are all rebellious and hypocrites: and, then, to justify their censures, instance, possibly in two or three, of whom perhaps they know no more than the bare names.

And what tends all this to, but mutual exasperation? Those, that do not believe them, are exasperated against the reporters; and those, who do believe them, are exasperated against the slandered.

And, as it tends to exasperation, so likewise it encourageth and hardeneth many in their sins. For, when they hear so much evil blazed abroad in the world; and few or none escape, without having some foul blot rubbed upon him, and infamous crime reported of him, whether truly or falsely, they think that sin and wickedness is no such strange thing; and so embolden themselves to commit that, which they hear is so common.

I beseech you, therefore, O Christians, for the peace of the Church, which else will continue sadly rent and divided; for the sake of

Christianity, which else will be discredited and reviled; for your Brethren's sake, who else will be discouraged or exasperated; be very cautious what reports you either receive or make of others. Their good name is very precious; precious to God, when their blameless conversation deserves it; and precious to themselves. Howsoever, unless there be absolute necessity, and you be constrained to do it for the glory of God and the good of others, divulge not their imperfections, though they be real; and, in no case whatsoever feign or devise false rumours concerning them. *Take heed, lest, if ye bite and devour one another, ye be* not *consumed one of another,* and one with another.

These are the Rules, to keep you from being guilty of slander against others.

2. But, if any are guilty of raising an ill report against you, observe these following *Rules and Directions, how you ought to demean yourselves in this case.*

(1) If the reproach they cast upon thee be true and deserved; though they perhaps have sinned in disclosing it to the world, yet make this use of it: go thou and disclose it; in thy most humble and penitent confessions, unto God; yea, and if thou art called thereunto by due form of law, give glory unto God by confessing it before men. Men possibly may upbraid thee with it; but, by this course, God will forgive thee, without upbraiding thee.

(2) If thou art falsely charged with that, which never was in thy heart to do, yet improve this providence to stir thee up to pray the more fervently, that God would for ever keep thee from falling into that sin, with which others slander thee: so shall all their reproaches be thrown merely into the air, and fall at last heavy upon their own heads, whilst thou rejoicest in the whiteness and innocency of thine own soul.

(3) If any unjustly slander thee, revenge not thyself upon them by slandering them again.

I must confess that this is a very hard lesson; and requires almost an angelical perfection, to perform it well. We read in the Epistle of St. Jude, that, when Michael and the Devil contended *about the body of Moses,* it is said, that the holy angel *durst not bring a railing accusation against* that wicked spirit; but only said, *The Lord rebuke thee.* And so, when men of devilish spirits spew out their slanders, and broach all the malicious accusations that their father, the Great Accuser, hath ever suggested unto them, return not slander for slander; for so the Devil would teach thee to be a devil; but, with all quietness and meekness, desire of God to rebuke

their lies and calumnies; and, by all wise and prudent means, vindicate thyself: clear up thine integrity; and make it appear, that, though *the archers* have *shot at* thee and *sorely grieved* thee, *with their arrows, even bitter words;* yet, still, thy *bow* remaineth *in* its *strength.* What saith the Apostle? 1 Pet. iii. 9, Render not *evil for evil, or railing for railing.* And, indeed, whosoever doth so, seeks only to heal a wound in his name, by making a much deeper one in his conscience.

(4) When thou art falsely aspersed and slandered, refer thyself, and appeal to the all-knowing God: retire into the peace and refuge of thine own conscience; and there shalt thou find enough, for their confutation and thy comfort.

Know, that a good name is in the power of every slanderous tongue to blast; but they cannot corrupt thy conscience to vote with them. Possibly, it is only the excellency and eminency of thy grace, that offends them: if so, glory in it; for the reproaches of wicked men are the best testimonials, that can be given of an excellent and singular Christian. In a strict and holy conversation, there is that contradiction to the loose profane of the world, as, at once, both convinceth and vexeth them, reproves and provokes them. And, if thou dost thus reproach them by thy life, wonder not at it, if they again reproach thee by their lying slanders. Be not too solicitous how they esteem of thee. It is miserable to live upon the reports and opinions of others: let us not much reckon what they say, but what reports our own consciences make; and, if a storm of obloquy and reproaches, railings and slanders, do at any time patter upon thee, how sweet is it to retire inwards to the calm innocency of our own hearts! there, are a thousand witnesses, which will tell us we have not deserved them. How comfortable is it, to remit our cause unto God; and to leave our vindication to him, for whose cause we suffer reproach! Thus, Jeremiah appeals to God: Jer. xx. 10, 12; *I heard the defaming of many.... Report, say they, and we will report it.... But, O Lord of Hosts,* thou *that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart.... unto thee have I opened my cause.* Thus, if, whilst wicked men are maliciously conspiring how to blot and sully our names, we can but keep our consciences clear; what need we much trouble ourselves how the wind blows abroad, since we are harboured under the retreat of a peaceable heart? They may possibly persuade others to believe their calumnies; but God, who searcheth the heart and conscience, knows that we are injured: and he is hastening on a day, wherein he will clear up our righteousness; and then the testimony of a good conscience shall put ten thousand slanderers to silence.

And thus I have spoken of this Second Sin, of Slander and Detraction.

III. The Third Sin against this Commandment, is, BASE FLATTERY and SOOTHING; which is a quite opposite extreme to the other, as both are opposite to truth.

Now this is, either Self-flattery, or the Flattering of others.

i. There is a SELF-FLATTERY.

And, indeed, every man is, as Plutarch well observed, his own greatest flatterer: and, however empty and defective we may be; yet we are all apt to love ourselves, perhaps without a rival, and to be puffed up with a vain conceit of our own imaginary perfections, to applaud and commend ourselves in our own thoughts and fancies, and to think that we excel all others in what we have; and, what we have not, we despise as nothing worth. From this abundance of a vain heart, break out arrogant boastings of ourselves, contemning of others, a presumptuous intruding ourselves into those employments and functions which we are no way able to manage. Learn, therefore, O Christian, to take the just measure of thyself. Let it not be too scanty: for that will make thee pusillanimous and cowardly; and, through an extreme of modesty, render thee unserviceable to God and the world. But rather let it be too scanty, than too large: for this will make thee proud, and arrogant, and undertaking; and, by exercising thyself in things too high for thee, thou wilt but spoil whatsoever thou rashly and overweeningly venturest upon. If thou art at any time called or necessitated to speak of thyself, let it rather be less than the truth, than more: for the tongue is of itself very apt to be lavish, when it hath so sweet and pleasing a theme, as a man's own praise. Take the advice of Solomon: Prov. xxvii. 2; *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.*

ii. THERE IS A SINFUL FLATTERING OF OTHERS: and that, either by an immoderate extolling of their virtues; or, what is worse, by a wicked commendation even of their very vices.

This is a sin most odious unto God, who hath threatened to *cut off all flattering lips:* Ps. xii. 3. But, especially, it is most detestable in ministers, whose very office and function it is to reprove men for their sins: if they shall *daub with untempered mortar,* and *sew pillows under men's* elbows; crying *Peace, Peace, when there is no peace to the wicked,* only that they may lull them asleep in their security, they do but betray their souls; and the blood of them God will certainly require at their hands.

Thus much, for the Ninth Commandment.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house: thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife; nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

THUS are we, at last, through the divine assistance, arrived to the Tenth and last Precept of the Moral Law.

Indeed, the Papists and the Lutherans divide it into two; making these words, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*, to be one entire command; and then putting together the other branches of it, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor his servant, &c.*, to piece up the last. But then, withal, to keep the number of them from swelling beyond a Decalogue, or Ten Words, the Lutherans join the First and Second together into one; and the Papists, in propounding the Commandments to the people, wholly leave it out; fearing they may be corrupted by hearing it, because it speaks too boldly against their idolatry and image-worship.

But, how infinitely temerarious is it, for vile wretches either to invert, or defalcate, and, as it were, to decimate the Laws of the Great God; by the which, they and all their actions must be judged at the Last Day!

And, certainly, were it not, that they might the better conceal from the ignorant common people the dangerous and heretical words of the Second Commandment, they could have lain under no temptation at all, to do a thing altogether so unreasonable, as the dividing of this Tenth Commandment into Two: for, upon the same ground, might they as well have divided it into seven; since there are many more concupiscences mentioned in it, than that of our Neighbour's Wife, and of his House. And, if each of these must constitute a distinct precept, why not also, *Thou shalt not covet his Man-Servant: Thou shalt not covet his Ox, &c.*

Besides, the order of the words makes clearly against them. For, whereas they make, *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife*, to be the Ninth; in the text, those words, *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbour's House*, go before them: so that, either they must needs confess it to belong to the Tenth, or else must grant a most unintelligible Hyperbaton both of sense and words: such, as would bring in utter confusion and disorder amongst those laws, which God certainly prescribed us in a most admirable method and disposition.

I. But, to speak no more of this: the sin, here prohibited, is CONCUPISCENCE, or an unlawful lusting after what is another man's.

For, since God had, in the other Commandments, forbidden the

Acts of sin against our neighbour, he well knew that the best means, to keep men from committing sin in act, would be to keep them from desiring it in Heart: and therefore, he, who is a Spirit, imposeth a law upon our spirits; and forbids us to covet, what before he had forbidden us to perpetrate. It is true, that other precepts are spiritual likewise; and their authority reacheth to the mind, and the most secret thoughts and imaginations of the heart: for our Saviour, Matt. v, accuseth him of adultery, that doth but lust after a woman; and him of murder that is but angry with his brother without a cause: and it is a most certain rule, that whatsoever precept prohibits the outward act of any sin, prohibits likewise the inward propension and desires of the soul towards it. But because these are not plainly and literally expressed in the former Commands, therefore the Infinite Wisdom of God thought it fit to add this last Command; wherein he doth expressly arraign and condemn the very first motions of our hearts towards any sinful object: and, whereas before he had commanded us, not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to slander, and bear false witness; now, in the last place, for the greater security that these his laws should not be violated, he commands us, not so much as to harbour in our hearts any desire towards these. So that this Tenth Commandment may well be called *Vinculum Legis:* and it is especially the bond, that strengthens and confirms the Second Table: for because all our outward actions take their first rise from our inward motions and concupiscence, there is no such way to provide for our innocency, as to lay a check and restraint upon these.

Concupiscence is, sometimes taken in Scripture in a good sense; but, more often, in an evil. There is an honest and lawful concupiscence: when we desire those things, which are lawful, to which we have right, and of which we have need. There is, likewise, a holy and pious, and a wicked and sinful concupiscence. We have both together, Gal. v. 17; *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.*

It is only concerning this sinful concupiscence, that we are at present to speak.

This evil concupiscence is the first born of original sin; the first essay, and expression of that corruption, which hath seized on us, and on all the wretched posterity of Adam.

For, in original sin, besides the guilt which results from the imputation of the primitive transgression to us and makes us liable to eternal death, there is likewise an universal depravation of our natures, consisting in Two Things.

First. In a loss of those spiritual perfections, wherewith man was endowed in his creation.

And this is the defacing of the image of God, which was stamped upon our nature in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness.

And, as a consequent upon this,

Secondly. In a violent propension and inclination to whatsoever is really evil, and contrary to the holy will and commands of God.

And this is the image of the Devil, into which man, by his voluntary apostasy and defection, hath transformed himself.

Now this inordinate inclination of the soul to what is evil and sinful, is properly the concupiscence forbidden in this Commandment. For the soul of man, being an active and busy creature, must still be putting forth itself in actions suitable to its nature. But, before the Fall, man enjoyed supernatural grace, though in a natural way; which enabled him to point every the least motion of his soul towards God, and to fix him as the object and end of all his actions: but, forfeiting this grace by the Fall, and being left in the hands of mere nature, all his actions now, instead of aspiring unto God, pitch only upon the creature. And this becomes sin unto us, not merely because we affect and desire created good; for that is lawful: but because we affect and desire it, in an inordinate manner; that is, without affecting and desiring God. And, thus, the soul not being able, without grace and the image of God, to raise its operations unto God, pitched upon what it can, viz., low sinful objects, to the neglect and slighting of God, and the great concernments of heaven. And this is, in the general, that inordinate disposition of the soul, which is here called coveting or concupiscence.

There are Four Degrees of this sinful Concupiscence.

i. There is the MOTUS PRIMÒ PRIMI, THE FIRST FILM AND SHADOW OF AN EVIL THOUGHT; the imperfect embryo of a sin, before it is well shaped in us, or hath received any lineaments and features.

And these the Scripture calls the Imaginations of the Thoughts of Men's Hearts: Gen. vi. 5; *God saw .... that every imagination of the thoughts of* man's *heart was only evil continually:* that is, the very first figment and flushing of our thoughts, is evil and corrupt. Indeed some of these are injected by the Devil. Many times, he assaults the dearest of God's children with horrid and black temptations: and importunately casts into their minds strange thoughts of questioning the very being of God, the truth of the Scriptures, the immortality of the soul, future rewards and punishments; and such other blasphemous, hideous, and unshapen monsters, against the very fundamentals of religion, for the truth of which they would

willingly sacrifice their very lives, as a testimony to them: these, indeed, are not their sins, although they are their great troubles and afflictions; for they come only from a principle without them, and they are merely passive and sufferers by them, as long as they are watchful to abhor and resist them, and to cast these fiery darts of the Devil back again into his face. But then there are other first motions arising up in our hearts towards those sins, which are more delightful and pleasant to our sensual inclinations: these, whatsoever the Papists say to the contrary, as soon as ever they do but begin to heave and stir in our breasts, are truly sins; and do in their measure, pollute and defile the soul: for the soul of man is like a clear mirror, upon which if you only breathe, you sully it, and leave a dimness upon it; so, truly, the very first breathings of an evil thought and desire in our souls, do sully their beauty, and dim their lustre, and render the image of God less conspicuous in them than it was before.

ii. A farther degree of this concupiscence, is, WHEN THESE EVIL MOTIONS ARE ENTERTAINED IN THE SENSUAL MIND WITH SOME MEASURE OF COMPLACENCY AND DELIGHT.

When a sinful object offers itself to a carnal heart, there is a kind of inward pleasing titillation, that affects it with delight, and begets a kind of sympathy between them: that look, as in natural sympathies, a man is taken and delighted with an object before he knows the reason why he is so; so, likewise, in this sinful sympathy, that is between a carnal heart and a sensual object, the heart is taken and delighted with it, before it hath had time to consider what there is in it that should so move and affect it. At the very first sight and glimpse of a person, we many times find that we conceive some more particular respect for him, than possibly for a whole crowd of others, though all may be equally unknown unto us: so, upon the very first glimpse and apparition of a sinful thought in our minds, we find that there is something in it that commands a particular regard from us; that unbosoms and unlocks our very souls unto it, even before we have the leisure to examine why.

iii. Hereupon follows ASSENT AND APPROBATION OF THE SIN IN THE PRACTICAL JUDGMENT; which, being blinded and forcibly carried away by the violence of corrupt and carnal affections, commends the sin to the executive faculties.

The understanding is the great trier of every deliberate action; so that nothing passeth into act, which hath not first passed examination and censure there: whether this or that action is to be done, is the great question canvassed in this court; and all the powers

and faculties of the soul wait what definite sentence will be here pronounced, and so accordingly proceed. Now, here, two things, do usually appear, and put in their plea to the judgment against sin: God's law; and God's advocate, Conscience: the Law condemns and Conscience cites that Law. But then the Affections step in; and bribe the judge with profit, or pleasure, or honour, and thereby corrupt the judgment to give its vote and assent unto sin.

iv. When any sinful motion hath thus gotten an allowance and pass from the judgment; then it BETAKES ITSELF TO THE WILL FOR A DECREE.

The judgment approves it; and, therefore, the will must now resolve to commit it: and then the sin is fully perfected and formed within; and there wants nothing but opportunity, to bring it forth into act.

And thus you see what this concupiscence is, and the degrees of it: viz., the First Bubblings-up of evil thoughts in our hearts; our Complacency and Delight in them, (as indeed, it is very hard, and much against corrupt nature, not to love these first-born of our souls); the Assent and Allowance of our Judgment; and the Decree and Resolution of our Wills: each of these is forbidden in this Commandment.

But if the sin proceeds any further, it then exceeds the bounds and limits of this Commandment; and falls under the prohibition of some of the former, which forbid the outward acts of sin.

Thus much, concerning Evil Concupiscence, in the general.

But here is mention likewise made of several particular objects of it: *Thy Neighbour's House*, his *Wife*, his *Servants*, his *Cattle;* (under which are comprehended all sorts of his possessions;) and all is included under the last clause, *Nor any thing that is thy neighbour's*. So that, to desire to take from him, either his life, or his good name, or his virtue, is this condemned covetousness; as well as a desire to take from him his temporal possessions and enjoyments.

II. I shall close up all with some PRACTICAL USE AND IMPROVEMENT.

i. LEARN, HERE, TO ADORE THE UNLIMITED AND BOUNDLESS SOVEREIGNTY OF THE GREAT GOD.

His authority immediately reacheth to the very soul and conscience, and lays an obligation upon our very thoughts and desires; which no human laws can do. It is but a folly for men to intermeddle with or impose laws upon that, of which they can take no cognizance: and, therefore, our thoughts and desires are free from their censure, any farther than they discover themselves by overt

acts. But, though they escape the commands and notice of men, yet they cannot escape God: *He seeth not as men see; neither judgeth he as men judge: the secrets of all hearts are open and bare before his eyes:* he looks through our very souls, and there is not the least hint of a thought, not the least breath of a desire stirring in us; but it is more distinctly visible unto him, than the most opacous bodies are unto us; *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity:* Ps. xciv. 11. And, therefore, his law, like his knowledge, reacheth unto the most secret recesses of the soul, searcheth every corner of the heart, judgeth and condemns those callow lusts which men never espy, and, if these find harbour and shelter there, condemns thee as a transgressor, and guilty of eternal death, how plausible soever thy external demeanour may be. And, therefore,

ii. CONTENT NOT THYSELF WITH AN OUTWARD CONFORMITY TO THE LAW; BUT LABOUR TO APPROVE THY HEART IN SINCERITY AND PURITY UNTO GOD: otherwise, thou art but a pharisaical hypocrite; and washest only the outside of the cup, when within thou art still full of unclean lusts.

This was the corrupt doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, that the Law reached only to the outward man: and, although we entertained and cherished wicked desires and evil purposes in our hearts; yet, so long as they did not break forth into outward crimes they were not to be imputed unto us, nor did God account them as sins. And this St. Paul confesseth of himself, that, whilst he was trained up in pharisaical principles, he did not understand the inward motions of lusts to be sins.

But, alas! this is but gilding over a dry and rotten post: which, though it may look beautiful, to men; yet, when God comes to examine it, will not abide the fiery trial. * Thou art as truly a murderer, a thief, an adulterer in God's sight, if thou dost but harbour bloody, unclean, unjust thoughts in thy heart; as thou wouldst be in men's if thou shouldst actually kill, or steal, or wallow in the open and professed acts of uncleanness.

Indeed, most men do herein grossly delude themselves: and, if they can but refrain from the outward commission of gross and scandalous sins, they very seldom reflect upon their heart-lusts; which, like deep ulcers, rankle inwardly, and perhaps grow incurable, when all the while they may be skimmed over with a fair and inoffensive life. Although the heart estuate and boil over with mali-

* —*scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum,*
Facti crimen habet. Juv. Sat. 13.

Εν τη προηρεσει εστιν ἡ μοχθηρια και το αδικειν. Arist. Rhe. c. 14.

cious, revengeful, lascivious thoughts; yet they usually dispense with these, and their natural conscience indulgeth them without disturbance.

But deceive not yourselves, *God is not mocked:* nor can he be imposed upon by external shows: neither will he judge of thee as others do, or as thou thyself dost.

I know it is a very difficult thing, to convince men of the great evil that there is in sinful thoughts and desires; and, therefore, very difficult to persuade them to labour against them: for because they are of a small and minute being, therefore men think they carry in them but small guilt and little danger. Every man, that hath but a remnant of conscience left him, will beware of gross and notorious crimes, that carry the mark of hell and damnation visibly stamped upon their foreheads: such as he, that can without reluctance commit them, must needs own himself for the apparent offspring of the Devil, But, for an invisible thought, a notion, a desire, a thing next nothing; this certainly I may please myself withal; for this can hurt no one. By a malicious purpose, I wrong no man: by a covetous desire, I extort from no man: and what so great evil then can there be in this?

It is true, indeed, wert thou only to deal with men, whom immaterial things touch not, there were no such great evil in them: but, when thou hast likewise to do with an immaterial and spiritual God, before whom thy very thoughts and desires appear as substantial and considerable as thy outward actions; then know that these, as slight and thin beings as they are, fall under his censure here, and will fall under his revenge hereafter.

Now were this persuasion effectually wrought into the minds of men, were it possible they should indulge themselves as they do, in vain, frothy, unclean, malicious thoughts and desires? were it possible they should so closely brood on these cockatrice eggs, which will bring forth nothing but serpents to sting them to eternal death? were it possible they should delight in rolling and tossing a sin to and fro in their fancy; and, by imagining it, make the Devil some recompense for not daring to commit it? Certainly, such men are altogether unacquainted with the life and power of true grace, when as those sins, which they dare not act, yet they dare with pleasure contemplate and dally with, in their fancies and imaginations.

Turn, therefore, your eyes inwards. Bewail and strive against that natural concupiscence, which lodgeth there: and never content thyself, that thou hast damned up the streams of thy corruptions,

from overflowing thy life and actions; till thou hast, in some good measure, dried up the fountain of it.

iii. See here the best and the surest methods, to keep us from the outward violation of God's laws; which is, to MORTIFY OUR CORRUPT CONCUPISCENCE AND DESIRES.

And, therefore, as I told you, the wisdom of God hath set this Commandment in the last place, as a fence and guard to all the rest; *Thou shalt not Covet;* and then, certainly, *Thou shalt not Kill,* nor *Steal,* nor *commit Adultery,* nor *bear False-Witness;* but be kept pure from all outward defilements of the flesh, when thou art thus cleansed from the inward defilements of the spirit.

For, from these it is, that all the more visible sins of our lives and actions have their supply. And, therefore, saith our Saviour, Matt. xv. 19, *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* Observe, that he puts evil thoughts in the front, as the leader of all this black regiment: for, out of this evil treasure of the heart, men bring forth evil things; and all the fruits of the flesh, the grapes of Sodom, and the clusters of Gomorrah, receive their sap and nourishment from this root of bitterness.

It ought, therefore, most deservedly to be the great and chief care of every Christian, to lay the axe to this root; to purge and heal this fountain, that sends forth such corrupt and poisonous streams; to keep his heart clean from sinful thoughts and affections, and then his life will be clean by consequence. And, therefore, God very pressingly requires this: Jer. iv. 14; *O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness.... how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?*

And, let me add, that, unless we make this our chief care; unless we do most solicitously observe this Last Commandment, all our care in observing the former will be utterly in vain; not only in respect of our acceptance and reward with God, but as to any good issue and effect. All other endeavours will be as successless, as to attempt the cure of an ulcerous body, without purging it; where the corruption will quickly break forth again: or to attempt the emptying of a pond, that hath many springs still rising up in the bottom of it; which will soon grow as full as ever it was.

DISCOURSES ON THE LAW.

ALL ARE TRANSGRESSORS OF THE LAW.

Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? JOHN vii. 19.

I HAVE, in several Discourses, according to the measure of divine assistance, endeavoured to unfold unto you the vast contents of the Law; and those various duties, that are summarily comprehended in those Ten Words, which the infinite wisdom of God hath given us as an Epitome and Abridgment of all Morality.

I well know and am assured, that there never was, neither can there be, any treatise so exact and particular, as to drain this whole subject; for, since it compriseth in it the Whole Duty of Man, in every particular occurrence and action of his life; since the variety of circumstances is almost infinite, and yet these circumstances specify our actions, and make them morally, either good or evil; and since every Precept extends its branches, so far, as to enjoin every man's duties collaterally, which yet it doth not touch directly, and to forbid very many sins by consequence, which it doth not immediately prohibit: therefore, I cannot but judge it next to an impossibility, minutely to reckon up every sin and every duty, methodically; to rank and dispose them every one under that particular Command, to which they do properly appertain.

The serious contemplation of this boundless extent of the Law occasioned the Psalmist to say, Ps. cxix. 96, that he had *seen an end of all perfection:* he had taken the dimensions of all other things and found them such, as an inquisitive mind might describe the whole limits and compass of them; *But thy commandment is exceeding broad:* not for the indulgence it gives; for so it is exceeding narrow: the broad way is not the Way of God's Commandments; but that, which leadeth down unto destruction: but broad it is, in respect of its comprehensiveness; as it reacheth to every thought of our souls, and every action of our lives, and every circumstance of both.

And, therefore, since the Law of God is of such an unmeasurable latitude; as astronomers take only the more conspicuous and remarkable stars into their constellations, but leave innumerable others, with which the heavens are every where thick studded, to the casual observation of the beholders: so I have contented myself to remark unto you those duties and sins, which are most eminent;

and to reduce them into order under those several precepts, when, they are required or forbidden, leaving innumerable others to your own private observation.

I hope that what hath been spoken of them, hath not been as water spilt upon the ground, or a sound only scattered and lost in the air. For these things are of infinite concernment to us. The knowledge and practice of them is as much worth, as heaven and eternal life. And, I may say unto you, as Moses to the Israelites, I have set life and death before you: life, if ye will hearken and obey; but eternal death and destruction, if ye refuse and rebel.

Entertain not any low and debasing thoughts of the Law. Think not the preaching of it unworthy the freedom of Gospel-Times or of Gospel-Spirits. I know that a company of flush notionists, who are very willing to shake off the yoke from their necks, and to deliver themselves rather from the conscience than from the power of sin, have clamored against this way of pressing duty, and enforcing the authority of the Law, as Legal Preaching; and have blasphemed it, as contrary to that liberty which Christ hath purchased for us, and much beneath the spiritual attainments of those that are made perfect in him. And I fear lest some of that corrupt leaven may still remain in the spirits of too many, who delight only to hear of the riches of free grace, the privileges of saints, the all-sufficiency and willingness of Christ to save them; and can melt themselves away in the very sweetness and tenderness of their souls, under such glorious discoveries. But, if obedience and good works be pressed: if we preach to them concerning Righteousness, Temperance, and Justice; and those moral duties of the Law, which respect our deportment towards men, as well as those which respect the worship and service of God: this is flat and insipid to these nice and refined professors; and they are ready, with a scornful pity, to censure it for honest, moral doctrine, fit only for young beginners, who are not as yet come from under a Legal Dispensation.

Beware, my Brethren, that you do not thus vilify and disparage the Holy Law of God. For, let me tell you, this is the Rule, that he hath given us to guide our actions; and this is the Law, by which he himself will judge them. There is no other way to obtain salvation, but only through obedience to it. This Law is the very gate of heaven; and the Two Tables are the two leaves of it. We shall never enter into it, but only through these: Rev. xxii. 14, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* Although our salvation be the purchase of Christ; and he alone

hath redeemed us from death, and procured for us glory and immortality by his own most precious blood: yet here the Scripture affirms, that we obtain a *right to the tree of life;* i. e. to everlasting life, by our obedience, and doing the commandments of God: a right, not indeed of merit; but a right of evidence. Our obedience to the Law is the only sound evidence, that we can have for our right to the promises of the Gospel; and, without an universal obedience in the whole course of our lives, all our joys, and comforts, and confident expectations of heaven and happiness are but splendid delusions and enthusiastical dreams; by which men of loose principles and practices seek to unite together two things, which God hath put at an irreconcileable distance: that is to say, an unholy life here, and a happy life hereafter. And if, to press this great truth upon the conscience; and to insist on the necessity of new obedience, and repentance from dead works, as well as faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, be legal preaching; let mine be ever so accounted. But, indeed, this is so far from being a legal doctrine, that it is one of the greatest and most precious truths, that the Gospel exhibits. To preach up Justification by the Law, as a Covenant, is legal: and makes void the death and merits of Jesus Christ: but to preach Obedience to the Law, as a Rule, is evangelical: and it savours as much of a New-Testament-Spirit, as they phrase it, to urge the Commands of the Law, as to display the Promises of the Gospel.

There are Two great Ends, for which the Law was at first given: Conviction, and Reformation.

First. It was given, and ought still to be preached, for the Conviction of Sinners. And it serves to convince them of three things.

First. Of their Guilt, contracted by the transgression of the Law. For, by laying their actions to the rule, and comparing the strictness and purity of the one, with the obliquity and defects of the other, they may discern wherein they have offended: and their natural conscience may have an advantage, to charge their sin and guilt upon them. Thus, saith the Apostle, Rom. iii. 19, 20, *We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.....for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

Secondly, Of that Wrath and Eternal Death, to which they stand exposed by reason of their sin and guilt. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die;* Ezek. xviii. 20. And, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them:* Gal. iii. 10. And,

Thirdly, It serves to convince us of the utter impossibility under which we lie, in this our fallen and corrupt estate, of ever obtain-

ing Justification by the Works of the Law. Rom. iii. 20, *By the works of the law shall no man be justified.....for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* For we cannot be justified by our obedience to it; since the Law demonstrates that our obedience is imperfect. Nor can we be justified by making satisfaction for our disobedience: since the same Law assures us, that the divine justice will accept no other satisfaction from us, but our undergoing the penalty threatened: which is eternal death. So that, to hope for life by satisfying and recompensing divine justice for our offences, is altogether as vain and foolish, as to hope for salvation by being damned.

Thus far the convincing work of the Law proceeds; and, when it hath brought a man to despair in himself, by showing him his guilt, and that wrath to which he stands exposed, and the remedilesness of his sad condition by anything that he can either do or suffer, it there leaves him in this horror of darkness, till the Spirit of God, who hath thus by the Ministry of the Law convinced him of his own unrighteousness in himself, doth also by the Ministry of the Gospel convince him of a righteousness out of himself, in the Lord Jesus Christ: for it is the Spirit, that convinceth us of *sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:* John xvi. 8.

Secondly. Another great end of Moral Law, is, Reformation and Obedience: that, having our Rule before us, we may endeavour to conform our actions according unto it; and be deterred, by the majesty and authority of it, from adding sin to sin, and treasuring up to ourselves *wrath against the day of wrath;* and that, by seeing our defects, we may endeavour to amend them. Thus the Apostle tells us, Gal. iii. 19, that the Law *was added because of transgressions:* i. e. because of the exceeding proneness of our corrupted natures to transgress, God hath given us a holy and severe law to curb in our lusts, to check our headstrong desires and sensual appetites, and to keep us within the bounds of duty and obedience.

For these Two great Ends was the Law given; Conviction and Reformation. And, upon both these accounts, the preaching of the Law is of absolute necessity. For,

First. Where the Law hath not yet wrought its convincing work with power upon the conscience, there the preaching of Jesus Christ will be altogether in vain. For, until a sinner be thoroughly convinced of this guilt and misery; and his conscience be awakened by the threats, and terrors of the Law, that he stands forfeited to the justice of God, liable to eternal wrath, and may every moment be swallowed up in the abyss of woe and torments, into which thousands before him have been already plunged; it will be impossible

to persuade him seriously to embrace those tenders of mercy, which the Gospel holds forth unto him by Jesus Christ. He wraps himself in his own carnal confidence and security, and sees no need of looking out after any other righteousness than his own: and, although his own righteousness be but *filthy rags*, both imperfect and impure; yet, being his own, he thinks them better than borrowed robes. And, therefore, saith our Saviour, Matt. ix. 12, The *whole need not a physician; but they, that are sick:* i. e. those, who think themselves whole and sound, although indeed they be sick unto death, they need not a physician: i. e. they apprehend not their need of him, nor will they be persuaded to seek unto him. And,

Secondly. As Christ cannot be accepted, where the Law doth not perform its convincing work; so he will not save, where it doth not perform its reforming work. Where there is no amendment of life, there can be no forgiveness of sins, nor true hopes of salvation: for Christ is given us, not to save us in our sins, but from them. He is *the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him:* Heb. v. 9.

And thus you see of what absolute necessity it is, to press the Law upon the conscience, to denounce its terrors, to inculcate its precepts; since the convincing work of it prepares us for Christ, and its reforming work for the salvation purchased by Christ. Without the one, we shall never come unto him: and, without the other, we shall never come to heaven by him.

That, which I chiefly design for the present, is, to treat of the Convincing Work of the Law: and that, in each of its three branches; Conviction of Guilt, Conviction of Wrath, and Conviction of the utter Impossibility we lie under to deliver ourselves from it by our own righteousness.

I shall now treat of the First.

To which purpose, I have chosen this portion of Scripture: John vii. 19; *Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the Law?*

In which words, we have an Expostulation and an Accusation.

I. In the EXPOSTULATION, we may take notice of Three Things.

i. That this Law, of which our Saviour speaks, was THE WHOLE SYSTEM OF DIVINE PRECEPTS, both concerning Ceremonial Rites, Judicial Processes, and Moral Duties.

For the Jews, from Moses' hands, received instructions for all their observances, gifts, offerings, washings, and other typical parts of worship; and for all their suits and controversies between man

and man, which was the common standing law of their nation; and, lastly, for all moral and natural duties, respecting either God or man. But this last being the chief part of the Law of Moses, is here likewise chiefly meant and intended; *Yet none of you keepeth the law:* i. e. None of you observeth to do according to the commands of the Moral Law: for our Saviour frequently bears them witness, that they were very punctual observers of the Ceremonial and Judicial Laws; but condemns them, for neglecting *the weightier matters of the* Moral *Law: judgment, mercy and faith:* Matt. xxiii.

ii. Whereas it is said, that the law was given unto them: i. e. to the Jews; it must be understood, that THE CEREMONIAL AND JUDICIAL LAW WAS GIVEN UNTO THEM, BOTH IMMEDIATELY AND ONLY; BUT THE MORAL LAW WAS GIVEN TO THEM INDEED IMMEDIATELY, BUT NOT ONLY.

No other people on earth were necessarily obliged to the observation of the Ceremonial Law, much less of the Judicial, but the Jews alone. Yea, and, as I have before observed, Proselytes of other nations were admitted to the hopes of salvation, without binding them to any other observances, besides the keeping of the Seven Precepts of Noah: to renounce idols; to worship the True God; to commit no murder, nor uncleanness, nor theft; to execute justice; and to abstain from blood. But the Moral Law, although it was given to them immediately, yet not only to them: but its obligation is as universal as human nature itself; for, indeed, it is the very law of nature and right reason, reduced into precepts: and, therefore, although Moses gave this Law unto them as the Minister and Mediator of the Old Covenant; yet it is likewise given to us by God, as the Cause and Author of our Nature, and the commands of it are as obligatory unto us, as them: so that, as our Saviour saith to the Jews, *Did not Moses give you the law?* I may say to you "Did not God give you the Law? and yet none of you keepeth the Law."

iii. Whereas it is said, that MOSES GAVE THEM THE LAW, we must here note:

1. That *Moses gave it only ministerially; but God primarily and authoritatively.* And, therefore, Gal. iii. 19, it is said, that the Law was given by *the hand of a mediator:* and Moses is commended for being *faithful in all* God's *house, as a servant:* Heb. iii. 5; as one who received commands from the great Lord and Master of it, and delivered them to his fellow-servants.

2. That, *although the Law were given by Moses; yet, as to the Moral part of it, and some of the Ceremonial, it was owned in the Church of*

God long before his ministry. As for some parts of the Ceremonial, Law, we read frequently of sacrifices and circumcision in use among the Patriarchs, many ages before Moses' time: and so saith our Saviour, John vii. 22, *Moses gave unto you* the *circumcision; not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers.* And, for the Moral Law, all the duties of it were incumbent upon mankind from the very first creation of the world, long before the promulgation of the Law from Mount Sinai: murder was forbidden, and known to be a sin, before the Lord proclaimed, *Thou shalt not kill:* yea, and causeless anger, and bloody revengeful purposes; as appears, Gen. iv. 5, 6: fornication was then also accounted a sin worthy of death; as appeareth, Gen. xxxviii. 24: the outward worship and service of God in solemn and public assemblies, was then known to be a duty; as appears, Gen. iv. 26, so that the Church of God never was, never shall be, without this Law; both written upon their hearts, and likewise preached unto them publicly by the ministry of the Church: for, so, Noah is said to be *a preacher of righteousness* to the old world: 2 Pet. ii. 5. Yet,

3. It is said to be given by Moses, *because of the more Solemn and Conspicuous Delivery of it at Mount Sinai:* when God especially magnified him, by calling him up into the Mount; conversing with him forty days; writing with his own finger the Ten Commandments, on Two Tables of Stone, and delivering them into his hands to exhibit unto the people. Now, because of this solemn promulgation of the Law by the means and ministry of Moses, our Saviour tells the Jews, that it was given them by him.

And this is all that I shall consider in the Expostulation, *Did not Moses give you the law?*

II. That, which I principally intend to insist on, is the ACCUSATION: *and yet none of you keepeth the law.*

An Accusation, that may truly be laid, not only against the Jews, but against all the world. Never any of the sons of men, from the very first creation of the world unto this day, excepting him only who was the Son of God, as well as the Son of Man, and whom it became *to fulfil all righteousness,* ever did or can perfectly and exactly fulfil all that the Law of God requires.

And, to this, the Scriptures give abundant testimony. Rom iii. 23, *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* Jam. iii. 2, *In many things we offend all.* And the Prophet confesseth the corruption of our natures, and the imperfection of our best performances: Isa. lxiv. 6, *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.* Solomon challengeth the best and holiest upon this

point: Prov. xx. 9, *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?* Many other places may be alledged to the same purpose: as, 1 John i. 3, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* And, verse 10, *If we say that we have not sinned we make him a liar.* And all these exhortations which we find in Scripture, to confess our sins, to repent of them, to watch and strive against them, do all clearly beat down the insolent pride of those, who except themselves out of the number of transgressors and offenders.

And, is it not very strange, that, after so many express testimonies of Scripture, than which nothing can be more plain and positive, notwithstanding that every day and hour might administer abundant conviction to them; yet there should be a generation of men so impudently vain-glorious, as to boast of an absolute perfection in this life?

And yet this is the doctrine of the Papists,* That a man may, all his lifetime, eschew every mortal sin; and do all, that the Law of God requires of him. And, not only so; but, as if God's laws were not a rule strict enough for them to walk by, they hold, he may do much more than he is obliged unto; and supererogate, and merit for others, who fall short of perfection; and lay the alms of his good works into the common stock and treasury of the Church, to be granted out to others that want them! And, although they affirm, that a justified person is still liable to commit venial sins; yet they make these venial sins to be of so slight a nature, that they are not repugnant to grace, interrupt not our friendship with God, deserve not eternal punishments, require neither confession nor repentance; and are of so harmless a nature, that he, that dieth in them, may yet notwithstanding be saved.† Certainly, these be a strange kind of sins, that do not offend God, nor deserve punishment, nor need repentance: and, if a man live free from all these, I think he may readily conclude that he may live free from all sin; for as they describe these venial sins, they can be none. Yea, some of them grant, that, by the special grace of God, a man may live free from the taint, not only of mortal, but of venial sins too; and so attain to a spotless perfection.

And this proud conceit of perfection is not only entertained by Papists; but by a sort of frantic people amongst us, who yet exclaim against all others, as Popish and Antichristian: but perceive not

* Conc. Trid. Ses. 6. c. 11.

† Bellar. de Amis. Grat. l. i. c. 3. *Nos docemus, communi consensu, peccata quædam, ex naturâ suâ, non indignum reddere hominem amicitiâ Dei, et mortis æternæ reum.*

whose craft hath taught them, both that and many other popish doctrines; as Justification by Works, the Insufficiency of the Scriptures, and Infallibility seated in any Human Breast. Certainly, *the hand of Joab is in all this.*

Concerning these, I shall say no more, but what the Wise Man observed of such a race of confident Self-Justiciaries in his days: Prov. xxx. 12, *There is a generation, that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*

i. "But what! ARE THEN THE LAWS OF GOD IMPOSSIBLE TO BE FULFILLED? Is it not an imputation to the equity and wisdom of God, that he should command that, which we are not able to perform?"

I answer, 1. *The laws of God are in themselves possible as well as just;* and there is nothing, which he now requires of us, which he did not endow us with strength in our creation to perform.

2. In this our fallen and corrupted estate, *our perfect obedience is become impossible; not because the Law is more strict and rigorous, but because we are grown weaker and more averse.*

3. *It is no injustice in God, to require what is impossible for us to perform, when that impossibility riseth from our own default.* It is not God, but ourselves who have made the observation of his laws impossible. And, although we have wasted our stock, and are become bankrupts; yet he may righteously exact from us the debt of obedience, which we owe him.

4. *Although a perfect and consummate obedience be now impossible; yet an inchoate and sincere obedience is possible, through the assistance of divine grace.* And, certainly, that Law which commands absolute perfection from us, requires us to endeavour after the highest degree that is attainable. So that these Commands, which exceed our present power, are neither vain nor unjust: for they engage us to exert our strength to the utmost, whereby we shall certainly attain unto a far greater perfection in our obedience, than if we were enjoined that, which were easy, or merely possible to perform. And such is the disingenuity of our temper, that, as much as the Law were relaxed of its severity, so much proportionably we also should remit of our industry: and, therefore, since our sloth will take allowances to itself, it is far more expedient for us, that God hath commanded from us things beyond the sphere of our present ability, than if he had commanded what was within it. For, I much doubt, whether, if God did not command us to do more than we can, we should do as much as we do.

ii. But, you will say, "TO REQUIRE MORE THAN IS POSSIBLE FOR

US TO PERFORM, MAY RATHER SEEM A DISCOURAGEMENT, THAN AN EXCITEMENT TO OUR ENDEAVOURS: FOR WHAT NATURAL MAN WILL ATTEMPT THAT, WHICH HE KNOWS TO BE IMPOSSIBLE?"

To this I answer, 1. That there is *a Twofold Impossibility:* one, that consists in the Nature of the thing propounded unto us; another, that consists only in an eminent and superlative Degree of it.

The first sort of impossibility, which consists in the Nature of the thing itself, doth utterly forbid all attempts and endeavours. Never any wise man attempted to climb up into the sun, or to metamorphose himself into an angel; because the thing itself, in all considerable degrees of it, is impossible.

But, where the impossibility consists only in some eminent Degree, and yet every degree that is attainable by us hath excellency enough in itself to invite and engage our endeavours, there the impossibility of the highest degree is no discouragement to a wise and rational man, from attempting to do his utmost. So it is, in this case: many degrees of holiness and obedience are attainable by us, and every degree that we can attain unto is infinitely worth our pains and labour: and, therefore, though absolute perfection in it be impossible; yet this can be no discouragement from using our utmost endeavours. The more we strive after it, the more we shall still attain: and what we do attain, is an abundant recompense of our industry; and carries in it so much excellency, as will quicken and excite us unto farther improvements. And, certainly, whilst we endeavour toward unattainable perfection, we shall attain unto much more, than if we set our mark shorter: as he, that aims at a star, is likely to shoot much higher, than he that aims only at a turf.

2. *As we must distinguish of Impossibility, so likewise of Perfection; which is either Legal or Evangelical.*

(1) There is a Legal Perfection, to which two things are necessarily required:

[1] Freedom from original sin: that there be no taint derived down upon our natures, no corruption inherent in us, that should incline us unto evil: for where original sin is, there legal righteousness and perfection cannot possibly be; for even this sin is a violation of the Law.

[2] There must be a perfect and exact actual fulfilling of all the laws of God, without failing in the least circumstance or least tittle of observation: for legal perfection cannot possibly consist with the least guilt.

(2) There is an Evangelical Perfection: which is a state, though not of innocency; yet of such a personal righteousness and holiness,

as shall be accepted and rewarded by God. Now this Evangelical Perfection consists in three things:

[1] In true and sincere Repentance for our past offences, begging pardon at God's hands, and endeavouring to abstain from the commission of the like for the future.

[2] In a true and lively Faith; whereby we rely upon the merits and satisfaction of Christ alone, for the remission of our sins.

[3] In new and sincere Obedience; endeavouring to live more holily, and to walk more strictly and perfectly before God, according to rules which he hath prescribed us in his holy laws. And this consists both in the mortification of the corrupt and sinful desires of the flesh and in the daily quickening and renewing of the Spirit; whereby we grow in grace, and make farther progress in Christianity.

When we do all this in the truth and sincerity of our souls, we are said to be perfect with an Evangelical or Gospel-perfection: and this, indeed, is all the inherent perfection and righteousness, that is attainable by us in this life. Thus it is, that the saints are, in Scripture, termed righteous: so Noah is called *righteous:* Gen. vii. 1; and Abraham pleads with God for the *righteous* in Sodom: Gen. xviii. 23, 24: and Zachary and Elizabeth have this testimony, that *they were both righteous, walking in all the commandments of* God *blameless,* Luke i. 6. Thus we have the ways of holiness called *paths of righteousness:* Ps. xxiii. 3: and the works of holiness, works of *righteousness*: Ps. xv. 2. Isa. lxiv. 5.

(3) This Evangelical perfection is attainable in this life; and, indeed, is attained by every sincere and upright Christian.

(4) But, for a Legal Perfection, it neither is nor can be attained in this life. And that upon two accounts. Because of the infinite exactness and holiness of the Law, it is not attained. Because of the corruption of our natures, it cannot be attained.

[1] The Law of God is infinitely spiritual; and obligeth us, not only to the performance of the external duties of obedience, but requires also the absolute perfection of the inward dispositions; not only that our love of God be sincere and cordial, but that it must be intense and perfect to the highest degree.

Thus Deut vi. 5, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* The Law and Covenant of works exact a perfection of degrees, in our love and obedience, as well as of parts. It must not only be sincere, but complete. It not only tries our obedience, by the touchstone; but weighs it in the balance, and gives us no grains of allowance. Now, is there any man upon earth, that so loves God, or obeys him, that it is not possible he should love him more, or obey him better?

Do not some Christians exceed others, in their grace and holiness? And might not all exceed themselves, if they would? The Law gives no allowance for any failings: and, therefore, if thou canst love God more, and serve him better, than thou dost, thou art not a fulfiller of the Law, but a transgressor of it. Hence St. Austin, in his Confessions, hath a pious Meditation, "Woe to our commendable life, if thou, Lord, setting thy mercy aside, shouldest examine it according to the strict rules of justice and the Law."

[2] Because of the corruption of our natures, this Legal Perfection cannot be attained in this life.

For we are totally depraved, in every property and faculty of our souls; and *every imagination of the thoughts of* our hearts is *only evil continually.* Our understandings are darkened with the thick mists of ignorance and error: our wills are perverted, and stand at a professed contradiction to the holy will of God: our affections are become impure and sensual; our hearts hard and insensible; our consciences seared and stupid; and our carnal minds are enmity against God: for they neither are *subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;* as the Apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 7. Now, where there is this corruption of nature, how can there possibly be perfection of life? for, *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one*

And, although this corruption be healed by regenerating grace; yet it is healed but in part. In the very best, *the flesh* still *lusteth against the Spirit,* and the *law* of the *members* warreth *against the law of the mind; so that* they *cannot do the things which* they *would*; as the Apostle sadly complains: Rom. vii. 23. Gal. v. 17.

Yea, let me add this, too: that, if corruption were perfectly rooted out of the heart of any; and such an extraordinary measure of sanctifying grace conferred upon them, as might enable them to perform whatsoever the Law of God required, and that to the last degree of intense love and zeal: yet would not this their perfect obedience amount unto a Legal Righteousness. The reason is; because the Law of Works, being given to man in his pure and upright estate, when he had a connatural power of his own to obey it, requires obedience to be performed only by his own strength, and allows not the auxiliaries of divine and supernatural grace to enable him. If therefore we should grant, which yet we deny, that, through some extraordinary assistance vouchsafed to some man, he should perfectly fulfil the whole Law; yet this actual obedience, because it proceeds not from original righteousness, and the rectitude of his nature wherewith he was at first endowed, would not at all avail him to the obtaining of Justification, according to

the terms of the Covenant of Works. For God requires, not only payment of the debt of obedience, which we owe unto him; but also that this payment be made out of the stock of those abilities, which he bestowed upon our nature in our first creation. Now, although it should be possible for any man to pay off the debts of nature, with the treasures of grace received of Christ; yet this would not satisfy the obligation of the Law: since, in the first covenant, it was agreed between God and man, that payment should be made out of another stock; viz., the power and free-will of uncorrupted nature.

iii. We are, therefore, under a TWOFOLD IMPOSSIBILITY OF BEING JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW.

1. Because *our obedience can never, in this life, attain absolute perfection*; but still there will be faults and flaws in it, from the mixture of that corruption, which still in part remains in the best and holiest; who, therefore, ought daily to pray, not out of a feigned and complimental humility, but a true and deep sense of their necessity, *Forgive us our trespasses.*

2. Because, *although our obedience could be perfected; yet perfect obedience, without original righteousness, will not amount unto a legal righteousness.*

And thus I have done with the Doctrinal part of these words; and shown you the impotency we all lie under, of a perfect and exact obedience to the Law.

III. Then let this SERVE

i. To ABASE THE PRIDE AND STAIN THE GLORY OF ALL FLESH.

Search into thyself O Man. Consider: what art thou, but a mass of sin, rottenness, and corruption? Reflect back upon the whole course of thy life. How hast thou spent those years, which the patience and long-suffering of God have lent thee? Hast thou not lived in open defiance of the great God of Heaven; and a continual violation of those laws which his authority hath imposed upon thee? Suffer thy conscience to awake, and bring in its accounts: and, though it should be like the unjust steward, and set down fifty for a hundred, and small sins for great; yet, even according to this computation, thou shalt find thyself desperately indebted to the justice of God. Read over the black catalogue of thy sins; and see, with astonishment and horror, how much thou owest.

Art thou not conscious to thyself of *any presumptuous Sins, committed against thy Knowledge and the checks and exclamations of thy Conscience; against thy natural light and reason, with a deliberate and resolved wilfulness?*

When thou hast seen all the curses and threatenings of the Law stand ready bent against thee, and hell-fire flashing in thy very face; when conscience hath commanded thee, in the name of the great God, to forbear, and denounced against thee wrath and death if thou daredst to commit it: hast thou not then fallen upon thy conscience, violently stopped its mouth, yea wounded and stabbed it? Yea, to add measure to this; hast thou not frequently relapsed into the commission of these presumptuous and daring sins; and repeated them, against thy vows, and protestations, and prayers, and seeming repentance: so ripping open the wounds of thy conscience again, before they were well closed, and making them bleed afresh? Who of us all can acquit ourselves of sin against knowledge and conscience, that have ever had any knowledge or conscience?

2. The *Sins of Ignorance,* which you have committed, are altogether numberless.

The soul naturally is a dark and confused chaos; and until the light of the glorious truth shine into it, sin and duty lie undistinguished; and, in the blindness of our minds, we oftentimes take the one for the other. We many times transgress the Law, because we know it not; and many times transgress it, when we intend to observe it. We heed not our own actions, but let them pass from us without consideration or reflection; and truly the greatest part of our lives is thus huddled up, without pondering what we do; and we are equally ignorant as careless, whether we do well or ill. And in such neglected actions, the far greater part must needs be sinful: for when we heed not the rule it is hard for us not to transgress it: and therefore saith the Psalmist, Ps. xix. 12, *Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.*

Add to this, 3. All thy *Sins of Infirmity and Weakness.*

Sins to which thou art betrayed contrary to thy purpose and resolutions, by the sudden surprise of a temptation: sins, which, although they may not be wilful and presumptuous, yet may be very gross and scandalous: as was St. Peter's denial of his Master.

Cast in also, 4. All the swarms of *thy Secret Sins, thy Vain Thoughts, and Sinful Desires.*

Sins, which, though the world can take no cognizance of them, yet are visible and conspicuous to the eyes of the All-Seeing God. He sees a sinful object lying in the embraces of thy affections: and if there be but the least hovering of thy heart, the least fluttering of thy thoughts towards vanity, he remarks it, and writes it down in his debt-book: although, perhaps, thy conscience may omit it.

And, oh, how vast a sum these alone amount unto! thy thoughts run as swift as time, and click as fast as the moments. And such a giddy, feathery, unconstant thing is the mind of man, that we cannot dwell long upon any one thought; but, whilst we are pursuing one, ten thousand others arise. Our thoughts are like those numberless motes, that play in a sunbeam: they flit up and down in our minds, without any certain scope or design. We cannot turn ourselves fast enough to them: nor can we think what we think: but God knoweth them all; and, for such infinite multitudes of thoughts, he sets down so many sins.

And, yet, besides all these, art thou not conscious to thyself,

5. Of the *Omission of many Holy Duties*, which thou oughtest to have performed in the several times and seasons when God called for them?

Canst thou not call to mind, that thou hast often refrained prayer from God, or charity from men? that thou hast not served him, nor helped them, when thou mightest have done it? Hast thou not neglected the ordinances of Jesus Christ, his word and sacraments, upon small or sought occasions, or else foolish and groundless prejudices? Endless it would be, to recount all the omissions we are guilty of: which, certainly, are many more that our duties; and yet, perhaps, far more numerous.

6. All thy *Miscarriages in those Duties, which thou hast performed.* The dulness of thy affections, the vagrancies of thy thoughts, thy hypocrisy and formality, all thy base and by-ends which like dead flies corrupt the most precious ointment, are all sins; and God's Law censures and condemns them for such.

Now, O Sinner, having such a load of guilt upon thy soul, how darest thou look the Holy and Just God in the face? Consider, O Wretch, what a life is this, which thou hast led; that, in all the millions of thoughts and actions about which thou hast employed thyself, the far greater part should be sins, for the matter of them; and all the rest sinful, for the manner. Can thy conscience lie lulled asleep, when all those troops and armies of Philistines be upon thee? Awake yet, at length, O stupid soul! Rouse thyself, and consider the woeful and desperate estate in which thou art. Wonder no longer at others, that they complain and mourn; and go heavily under the burthen of their sins, and the pangs and smart of their convictions. Muse not that there should be some few, who, with horror, cry out that they are undone and ruined, eternally undone! Alas! wert thou but once shaken out of thy lethargy; couldst thou but look about thee, and seriously view and ponder the infinite

multitude and the nature of thy sins: nothing, but the strong consolations of God, could keep thee from running up and down distracted with the terrors of the Lord; and, with the utmost horror and despair, crying out, thou art damned, damned already!

But, the truth is, men are *dead in trespasses and sins.* Those sins, which are the cause of their misery, keep them from feeling it.

But, believe it, you must be convinced of your sins, either here, or hereafter. Conscience will revive in you, if not here, yet in hell, Nay, it is now writing down your sins against you, and drawing up the bill of your indictment. But, as some use such juices, that what they write shall not be legible till held to the fire; so do many men's consciences write down their sins: which although they cannot perhaps read now, yet they shall read the long and black scroll of them, when they hold it against the flames of hell. And how sad will it be, then to know that you are sinners, when you shall likewise know that you are eternally damned for your sins! when your consciences, which are now peaceable and gentle, shall then, on a sudden, rave, and shriek, and fly in your faces; and begin then, but then alas too late! to terrify and affright you, when there is no hope nor possibility of remedy!

Be persuaded, therefore, now to recognize your sins, while there is yet hope. The day of grace is not yet set upon you. Mercy and pardon are yet offered to you: and those sins, which you are convinced of by the strictness of the Law, you may, if you will seek it by true repentance, obtain remission of, through the grace and mercy of the Gospel.

ii. Are all transgressors of the Law? Then here see A WOEFUL SHIPWRECK OF THE HOPES AND CONFIDENCES OF ALL SELF-JUSTICIARIES.

Hence learn, that an honest, quiet, civil life, free from the gross and scandalous pollutions of the world, is no sufficient plea for heaven. Yet this alone is that, which the generality, of the ignorant sort especially, rely upon. Their lives are harmless, their dealings just and upright: none can complain that they are wronged by them: and therefore, certainly, if God will save any, they must be of the number.

I heartily wish, that, in these words, I could have personated you: but, truly, I doubt that the most of you are not yet come so far as morality; nor have attained to the honesty of those, who yet shall fall short of heaven.

But, suppose you could really plead this; yet this plea is invalid. For, is there nothing, that you know by yourselves, either relating

to God or man, wherein you have offended? Had you never so much as a thought in you, that slipped awry? Have you never uttered a word, that so much as lisped contrary to the Holy Law of God? Did you never do any one action, which purity and innocence itself might not own? Have your lives, in every point, been as strict and holy, as the Law of God commands them to be? If thou darest to affirm this, thou makest not thyself the more innocent thereby, but the more unpardonable; and art a senseless, stupid wretch, for thinking thyself pure and clean. Or if, upon a narrower search, thou findest some miscarriages by thyself, remember thou art yet but at the threshold of thy heart: enter farther into thyself, and thou shalt discover yet greater abominations. However, could it be supposed, that thou art guilty but of one sin, and that one the least that ever was committed: yet this one sin makes thee a transgressor of the Law; and the guilt of it can never be expiated, by anything, which thou canst either do or suffer; but eternal death and wrath must be thy portion, unless the blood of Jesus Christ purge thee from it.

iii. See, then, WHAT ABSOLUTE NEED WE ALL STAND IN OF JESUS CHRIST.

Not only those amongst us, whose lives have been openly gross and scandalous; but even those, also, who are the most circumspect and careful in their walkings. Though they do not wallow and roll themselves in the common pollutions of the world; yet it is not possible, but that, in so dirty a road, they must be besprinkled, and their garments *spotted with the flesh.*

Absolute perfection is a state, rather to be wished for, than enjoyed in this life. The utmost we can here attain unto, is, not to commit presumptuous sins; nor to allow ourselves in any, when, through infirmity, we do commit them. But none of our sins, whether of Presumption or of Weakness, whether of Ignorance or against Knowledge, whether the sins of our Thoughts or of our Actions, can be pardoned without the blood of God, and the sufferings of our Almighty Saviour. It is the same precious blood, that satisfied God's justice for the adultery and murder of David, the incest of Lot, the perjury of Peter, that must satisfy it likewise for thy vain and foolish thoughts, and rash and idle words, if ever thou art saved. For *without blood* there *is no remission:* Heb. ix. 22: and, without remission, there can be no salvation, Acts xxii. 16.

And, indeed, this is one of the great and main ends of giving the Law, that the necessity and all sufficiency of Christ to save us may be rendered the more conspicuous. Thus, saith the Apostle: Rom.

x. 4, *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.* The Law was given us, not that we should seek Justification by the observance of it; but, finding it impossible to be justified by fulfilling of it, we should thereby be driven unto Christ's righteousness, who hath both fulfilled it in himself, and satisfied for our transgressing of it. And, therefore, saith the same Apostle, Gal. iii. 24, *The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* To this end was it promulgated, that, seeing the multiplicity and strictness of its commands, the rigor and utter insupportableness of its threatenings; and being, withal, sensibly convinced of our weakness and impotency to fulfil the commands enjoined, and, thereupon, of our liableness to undergo the penalty threatened; we might thereby be frighted and terrified, and, as it were, by a schoolmaster, whipped unto Christ, to find that righteousness in him that may answer all the demands of the Law, which in ourselves we could not find. And, whilst we make this use of the Law, we bring it to be subservient to the Gospel.

II.

TRANSGRESSORS OF THE LAW ARE UNDER THE CURSE.

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, cursed in every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. GAL. iii. 10.

THE Law consists of two parts: a system of Precepts; and the Sanction and Enforcement of those precepts, by promises and threatenings.

According to the first, it is the Rule of our Obedience; and shows what we ought to render unto God.

According to the second, it is the Rule of Divine Justice; and shows what God will render unto us.

I have already considered the Precepts of the Law; and, in part, treated of those important duties, both of piety towards God and of love and equity towards men, that are summarily comprehended in them.

The Sanction of this Law is twofold.

FIRST. A Promise of Life and Happiness to the observers of it.

Rom. x. 5, *Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man, which doeth those things, shall live by them.* And, again, Gal. iii. 12, *The man, that doeth them, shall live in them,* i. e. by them.

Which we have once more confirmed to us, Ezek. xx. 11, *I gave them my statutes, and.....my judgments; which if a man do, he shall even live in them.* All which places are transcribed from that of Moses, Lev. xviii. 5, *Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do he shall live in them,* or by them. But, because our natures are woefully degenerated from their primitive excellency; and we have contracted such an impotency, that the same obedience, which, in our upright estate, was both easy and delightful, is now become irksome and impossible, as I have demonstrated to you in the last subject I treated of: therefore we can receive no consolation from this promise; nor entertain any hopes of life and salvation, according to the tenor of this Covenant of Works: *For all have sinned, and* are *come short of the glory of God.* The Precepts of the Law convince us of sin; and our sins convince us that we have no right to the Promise of the Law. And, therefore, as I have endeavoured to promote the conviction of sin, by representing to you the infinite defects, irregularities, and contrarieties of our actions compared with the divine commands; so now, likewise, I shall endeavour to convince of that wrath, which is due unto the transgressors of the Law. For there is a,

SECOND Sanction of the Law, by the Threatenings of a most heavy and tremendous Curse, against all that transgress it: a curse, that will blast and wither their souls for ever. And this we have in the words of my text: *Cursed is every one, who,* &c.

The great design of the Apostle in this chapter, and indeed in this whole Epistle, is, to demonstrate, that Justification cannot possibly be obtained by the righteousness of the Law, nor according to the terms of the First Covenant, *Do this, and live.* And, among many others, one of the strongest arguments he makes use of to prove this his assertion, lies couched in these words, which we are now considering.

I. Wherein we have these Two Parts:

First. A Thesis, or POSITION; *As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse.*

Secondly. A PROOF of this position, by an irrefragable testimony of Scripture; *For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.*

The words are plain and obvious. Only I shall briefly enquire,

What the Apostle means by those, who *are of the Works of the Law.* And, What it is to be Accursed.

i. To the FORMER, I answer: To be *of the Works of the Law* signifies no other, than to expect justification and eternal happiness by

legal works; to depend wholly on our obedience unto and observation of the Law, to render us acceptable to God and worthy of eternal life.

Those, who thus rely on a legal righteousness, are said to be *of the Works of the Law;* as persons are said to be of such or such a party; because they stiffly defend the cause of the Law; and stand for justification by the observance of it, in opposition to the grace of the Gospel, and the way of obtaining justification and eternal life by believing. But, saith the Apostle, As many as are of this party and faction are accursed; even by the sentence of that Law, which they hope will justify them: *For it is written* in the Law, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things,* &c.

Now, ii. To BE ACCURSED or to BE UNDER THE CURSE, is no other than to be liable unto or actually under that wrath and punishment which the Law threatens shall be inflicted on the transgressors, as a satisfaction to divine justice for their offences.

So that the true and proper notion of a curse is this: That it is the denunciation or execution of the punishment contained in the Law, in order to the satisfaction of divine justice for transgressing the precepts of it.

Some, therefore, are only under the curse denounced. And so are all wicked men, whose state is prosperous in this life: though they flourish in wealth and honour, and float in ease and pleasure; yet are they liable to all that woe and wrath, with which the threatenings of the Law stand charged against them.

Some are under the curse already executed. And so are all wicked men, on whom God begins to take vengeance and exact satisfaction, in the miseries and punishments which he inflicts on them in this life. He sometimes puts the cup of fury and trembling into their hands, while they are on earth; and gives them some foretastes of that bitter draught, the dregs of which they must forever drink off in hell. And, there, they are accursed completely and eternally. For the curse of the Law contains in it all the direful ingredients of God's wrath: whatsoever we can suffer, either in this world or in the world to come, all plagues, woes, and miseries, being comprehended in that death threatened in the Covenant of Works: *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die:* Gen. ii. 17. It is true, many godly men suffer sore afflictions in this life, pains, diseases, losses, persecutions from men, and chastisements from God: yet these are not curses to them, because not inflicted for the satisfaction of divine justice; but for the exercise of their graces, and the manifestation of his holiness; as I shall here-

after show you more at large. But whatsoever evil any wicked man suffers, it is from the malignity of the curse; which will, at last pour all its venom into his cup in hell.

And, thus, you have seen what is, to be *of the Works of the Law;* and what it is, to be of the Curse of the Law.

Suffer me only to paraphrase the words, and I shall add no more for explication.

It is impossible, saith the Apostle, that any should be now justified by the observation of the Law: for, as many as rely upon their works only, to justify them; and endeavour to uphold the faction of a legal righteousness, against the grace of the Gospel, and the way of justification by faith; they are under a curse, and stand liable to all the punishments which the Law threatens. *For,* even in the Law, *it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*: which because no mere man hath done, therefore all lie under the doom of this curse: and those, who expect justification by no other way, must forever lie under the execution of it. And this I take to be the clear scope of the Apostle's argument.

Now, whereas he saith, *It is written,* he certainly refers us to Deut. xxvii. 26, *Cursed* is *he, that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.* In the original it is, לא־קים *Non stabilet*: "Doth not establish," or "ratify." In the Septuagint ος ουκ εμμενει, *non permanet:* "Doth not continue:" and, according to that translation, the Apostle both read, and used them. However, the sense is the same in both.

II. You see, then, what an UNIVERSAL CURSE these words denounce: a curse, that sets its mouth, and dischargeth its thunder, against all the sinful sons of Adam. A curse it is, which, as Zechariah speaks, chap. v. 3, *goeth forth over the face of the whole earth;* and will, if mercy rebate not the edge of it, *cut off on* every *side* all those, that stand in its way; that is, all that are sinners: and all are so; for the characters, which the Apostle doth here give to those, who are under the curse of the Law, are so general and comprehensive, that no man living could possibly escape, if God should judge him according to the condition of the Covenant of Works. For,

i. It is said, that every one is accursed, that DOTH NOT those things which are written in the book of the Law.

And this is a curse, that cuts off on both sides. On this side, it cuts off those, who are but negatively righteous, who ground all their hopes for heaven and happiness upon what they have not done; and put into the inventory of their virtues, that they have not been vicious, no extortioners, no unjust persons, no adulterers,

&c., but, alas! this account will not pass in the day of reckoning: the Law requires thee, not only to forbear the gross acts of sin, but to perform the duties of obedience. And this cuts off, on that side, all those, who have done contrary to what is written in the Law: and that, not only scandalous and outrageous sinners; but even those, who have been least peccant, and rather sinners in thought and imagination than in practice: yet these also fall under the curse of the Law.

ii. Those, also, who have NOT DONE ALL, that is written in th Law, are struck with this anathema or curse.

And where is the man, that dares lift up his face, to justify himself against this charge? Is there no one duty, either of the First or Second Table, respecting either God or Man, that thou hast utterly neglected? Is there no one sin, that thou hast committed; either ignorantly or knowingly, either out of weakness or wilfulness, by surprise or upon deliberation? Certainly, the Law of God is so vastly large and comprehensive, that we can scarcely know all that is contained in it: and our impotence and corruption so great, that, much less, can we perform it: and yet, in case of the least failure in any one particular, we become obnoxious to the curse and malediction.

iii. But suppose that, at some time or other, thou shouldst have performed every particular duty; yet, hast thou CONTINUED in all things, that are written in the Law to do them? Hast thou spun an even thread of obedience? Are there no flaws, no breaks, no breaches in it? Hast thou been always constant, in the highest fervour of thy zeal for God? Hast thou been in the fear of the Lord, all the days of thy life? Have thy affections never languished; thy thoughts never turned aside, so much as to glance upon vanity? Didst thou never drop one unsavoury word; nor do any one action, which, both for the matter and manner of it, was not perfectly agreeable to the Law? If otherwise, as indeed such an absolute perfection of holiness is to be found in no creatures but the glorified spirits, thou art still exposed to the curse of the Law: for *Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.*

III. This CURSE IS MOST DREADFUL, if we consider that it is universal; and extends itself not only over all persons, but unto all things. Every thing, which a sinner either doth or hath, is accursed to him.

Let us a little rip up the bowels of this Curse, that you may see how much rancour and venom is contained in it.

i. He is accursed, IN ALL HIS TEMPORAL ENJOYMENTS.

His bread is kneaded, and his drink mingled, with a curse: his table becomes a snare to him; and every morsel he eats, is dipped in the bitterness of God's wrath and curse. In his health, his food is poisoned with this curse; and, in his sickness, his physic. He is cursed, in every place whither he comes; and the place cursed, for his sake: *Cursed in the city, and cursed in the field: cursed* in his *basket and store: cursed* in *the fruit of* his *body, and* in *the fruit of* his *land;* in *the increase of* his *kine, and of* his *flocks: cursed when* he cometh *in, and when* he goeth *out:* as we find this bead-roll of curses denounced against him, Deut. xxviii. 16—20. His very mercies are curses unto him: as, on the contrary, a true believer's afflictions are blessings. He is blessed in poverty, in sickness, in persecution, yea in death itself: so unbelievers' mercies are all turned into plagues and curses. For, as in an unsound and corrupted body, the wholesomest food converts to putrefaction and peccant humours, and nourishes the disease more than the man: so, to a corrupt and sinful soul, the best of God's temporal favours turn to the nourishment of his disease. His plenty and prosperity do but purvey for his lusts: and abundance, that God gives him, doth but lay in provision for the flesh; and, through the secret but righteous judgment of God proves only a stronger temptation unto sin, and makes him the more fit to promote the Devil's service and his own damnation.

ii. He is accursed, IN ALL HIS SPIRITUAL ENJOYMENTS.

The sacred ordinances of Jesus Christ, which are the only ordinary means, which God hath appointed to make us eternally blessed; yet even these are all cursed to him: for they do but the more harden and confirm him in his sins, and ripen him the sooner for everlasting destruction. For, as the rain, which falls upon the earth, makes a living tree, whose sap is in it, to bud and flourish, and bring forth its seasonable fruits; but only serves the sooner to rot a dead and withered tree: so those very ordinances and dispensations of the means of grace, which distil alike both upon believers and unbelievers, have a far different influence upon them. Into the one, they kindly insinuate, and call forth their latent graces; and, where they find the root of the matter, make them sprout and blossom into a beautiful profession, and make them bring forth plentiful fruits unto holiness: but, to the other, that are dead trunks, these showers of heaven and droppings of the sanctuary, which fall upon them, tend only to rot them, and to make them the sooner fit fuel for hell and everlasting burnings.

And, oh, what a sad and dreadful curse is this, that thou, who comest to hear the same word preached, which to others proves the *savour of life unto life* eternal, to thee, through the corruption and wickedness of thine own heart, it should prove the *savour of death unto death* eternal; and, instead of humbling thee under the power and evidence of the truth, should only exasperate thy heart against the truth, and those who dispense it! that the sound of the Gospel should only deafen thine ears, and the light of the glorious truth only blind thine eyes! that thou, who, perhaps partakest of the sacrament shouldst eat thine own damnation, when thou eatest the body of a Saviour; and drink a deep curse to thyself, when thou drinkest the cup of blessing! Thy sins are of so baneful a nature, that they poison even the blood of Christ unto thee; and, whilst the heavenly meat is in thy mouth, even the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is meat indeed to a believing soul, the curse of God cometh upon thee!

And, yet, how many such spiders have we, who suck poison out of the sweetest flowers! Clayey and earthy souls, that are but hardened by the sunshine of the Gospel, and made the more incapable of any impressions to be wrought upon them. And what a dreadful curse is this, when the means of grace shall be turned into the occasion of sin! How deplorable is their estate, when mercy itself shall ruin them, and salvation itself shall destroy them!

iii. If all the favours of God's providence, and all the dispensations of his Grace; then, certainly, much more are ALL THEIR CHASTISEMENTS AND AFFLICTIONS TURNED INTO CURSES.

If there be poison in the honey, much more certainly is there in the sting. If God be wroth with them, when he shines; much more when he frowns upon them. Indeed, true believers may, with a great deal of peace and calmness, undergo all their afflictions; for, though they be sore and heavy, yet there is nothing of the curse in them: that was all received into the body of Christ, when he hung upon the cross; and their Father corrects them, not to satisfy his justice upon them, but only by a sharp medicine to purge them from their sins, and to make them partakers of his holiness: though the potion may be bitter and irksome in the taking, yet the effects of it are salutary and healthful: it is not the evils we suffer, that are curses; but the ordination of those evils, to the satisfying of divine vengeance upon us. And, therefore, sad and dreadful is the condition of guilty sinners, who are out of Christ; for there is not the least affliction that befals them, not the least gripe of any pain, not the least loss in their estates the most slight and inconsiderable

cross that is, but it is a curse inflicted upon them by the justice of God for the guilt of their sins. God is beginning to satisfy his justice upon them: he is beginning to take them by the throat, and to exact from them what they owe him. Every affliction is, to them, but part of payment of that vast and infinite sum of plagues, which God will most severely require from them in hell. And, there,

iv. They shall be cursed to purpose, and LIE FOR EVER UNDER THE REVENGING WRATH OF GOD. Their sentence is, *Depart from me, ye cursed:* Matt. xxv. 41. Hell, indeed, is the general assembly of all curses and plagues. All the curses they have undergone, in this present life, are but the curses and preparations to this fatal and final curse.

They are eternally cursed,

1. In *their Separation from the Sight and Presence of God.* They have, indeed, the presence of his wrath, to torment them; and of his power, to uphold them under their torments, and to enlarge their souls to contain all those vials of pure wrath and fury which he will pour into them: but thy are for ever cut off from the presence of his grace and of his glory. The enjoyment of God is the sole blessedness of a rational creature: and, therefore, to be cut off from those ineffable communications of himself, which he vouchsafes to the blessed spirits, is such a curse, as is as ineffable as are the joys and happinesses which they lose.

2. They are cursed, in *the Society of Devils and Damned Spirits;* hideous company, who both upbraid and torture them for their sins.

3. They are accursed, in *the Work of Hell.* For their whole employment shall be blaspheming and cursing: and, in the anguish and horror of their spirits, roaring out, and exclaiming both against God and themselves. Then, *as* they *loved cursing,* and *clothed* themselves *with* it *as with* a *garment; so* it shall *come into* their *bowels like water, and like oil into* their *bones;* as the Psalmist speaks: Ps. cix. 17, 18.

4. They shall be cursed, in *the Pains and Torments which they must eternally suffer.* Every limb shall drop with flakes of unquenchable fire; and the worm of conscience shall prey upon them, and sting them with unsupportable anguish: and, in this unspeakable torture, shall they ever live a never-dying death. This is their final curse: *Upon the wicked* God *shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.*

And thus you see what malignity and Venom the Curse contains, which the Law threatens against all the Transgressors of it.

IV. Now, briefly to APPLY this.

i. See, here, WHAT AN ACCURSED THING SIN IS, THAT CARRIES, WRAPPED UP IN ITS BOWELS, WOE, WRATH, AND ETERNAL DEATH.

To this it is, that you owe all the miseries, which you have already felt; and, to this, are due all, that God hath threatened to inflict hereafter. The Law is not to be condemned, for condemning the transgressors of it. The Justice of God is not to be censured, for taking the forfeiture of our lives and souls. But all our misery is to be charged upon ourselves; upon our corrupt natures, and our sinful lives. We ourselves breed those vipers, that gnaw our very bowels: and, as putrified bodies breed those filthy worms and insects, which devour them; so do we breed those filthy lusts in our hearts, which are continually preying upon our vitals, and will at last fatally destroy us. As God is a holy God; so he infinitely hates sin: and, as he is a just God; so he will assuredly punish it. Not a soul of man shall escape, not a sin be passed by, without having its due curse. Yea, we see God so hates sin, that, when he finds but the imputation of it upon his own Son, divine vengeance will not suffer him to escape: but loads him with sorrows, and fills his soul with darkness and agonies; nails him to the cross, and there exacts from him a dreadful recompense, which he was fain to make good to the utmost demand of his Father's justice, before he could be discharged. One drop of this poison, being let fall upon the once glorious angels, turned them into devils, and made all their rays of light and lustre fall off from them: and, being once tainted with this venom, God could no longer endure them in his presence, but hurled them down all flaming into hell. It is sin, that is the fuel of those unquenchable flames; and lays in all those stores of fire and brimstone, which shall there burn for ever. It is sin, that disrobes man of his innocence, turns him out of Paradise, and will certainly, if not repented of and forsaken, turn him into hell. And, therefore, as ye love God or your own souls, be sure that ye hate iniquity: entertain not any kind thoughts of it, however it tempt and solicit you. Remember, the curse of God is affixed inseparably unto it; and, if you will suffer the accursed thing to cleave unto you, you must for ever be accursed with it.

ii. If every transgressor of the Law be accursed, see, then, THE DESPERATE FOLLY OF THOSE WRETCHES, WHO MAKE SLIGHT OF SIN; AND ACCOUNT THE COMMISSION OF IT A MATTER OF SMALL, OR NO CONCERN TO THEM.

They play with death, and dally with woes and curses; and, so, stupid and insensate are they, that they think that to be of no great moment, which yet can everlastingly damn them! Did we but seriously consider with what a weighty curse every sin is burdened, how much fire and sulphur and deadly materials are contained with-

in the bowels of it, we should be as fearful to touch or come near it, as to take up a lighted granado, when it is just ready to break about us and tear us in pieces: and, certainly, they are most justly to be condemned of madness and folly, that will rashly venture upon their own everlasting destruction; and hurl firebrands, arrows, and death, which will assuredly light upon themselves; and yet say *Am not I in sport?*

iii. If every transgression exposeth us to the curse, BEWARE, THEN, THAT YOU NEVER ENCOURAGE YOURSELVES TO COMMIT ANY SIN, BECAUSE PERHAPS THE WORLD ACCOUNTS IT BUT SMALL AND LITTLE. For the least is as much a transgression of the Law, and makes thee as liable to the curse of God and eternal damnation, as the greatest and most flagitious. They are all mortal and deadly: and thou mayest as well suffer a little stab at the heart, as allow thyself in the commission of any sin because it is little.

iv. See, here, WHAT REASON WE HAVE TO BLESS GOD FOR JESUS CHRIST, who hath delivered us from the Curse of the Law.

But, so much, for this time.

III.

OF OUR REDEMPTION BY CHRIST, FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. GAL. iii. 13.

How severe and terrible the Curse is, which the Law denounceth against those, who continue not in all things which are written therein, to do them, you have heard already. They are accursed in their bodies and in their souls; in their temporal and in their spiritual enjoyments: and all these are but direful preparations for a consummate curse, to be inflicted upon them in their everlasting damnation.

This curse is the wretched inheritance of all the guilty sons of Adam. As soon as ever they thrust their traitorous heads into the world, the curse of God hovers over them, like a black cloud charged with storms and tempests; and, oftentimes, lets fall some few drops of divine wrath upon them, while they are here on earth: but threatens, continually, to break; and pour out on them whole floods of fire and brimstone, and to overwhelm them with a deluge of eternal wrath in hell.

And, now, since it hath been demonstrated, that all mankind are transgressors of the Law and that all transgressors of it are obnoxious to the Curse which it threatens, we may easily, from these two premises, conclude, That we are all of us involved and wrapped up in the curse of God. This is our miserable state by nature; born children of wrath and heirs of perdition, through the just imputation of the first sin unto us; and daily enhancing our misery and embittering the curse, by innumerable actual transgressions.

Now, what hope, or possibility, is there, for such condemned malefactors to escape the wrath of God, and the damnation of hell?

Indeed, we yet walk up and down in the world; but the world is only a great prison to us: a prison, full of condemned wretches, who, although they are yet reprieved by God's arbitrary patience, some for a longer and others for a shorter time, yet all drag their chains and fetters about with them; and, if they were but sensible of their condition, might still dreadfully expect when the divine justice would hale them, one after another, to their execution. The Law sentenceth us for violating its commands: the truth and veracity of God plead against us the threatenings of the Law, and will not recede from the rigour of those plagues and curses that are therein denounced: the holiness and purity of God loaths us, for defacing his image, and deforming our souls with vile and filthy lusts: the justice of God brandishes its sword against us, and demands satisfaction for all the injuries we have done against it: the Devil pleads his right to us, and impatiently expects a commission to drag us away to torments: not an angel in heaven, nor any creature on earth, dare stand our friend. God frowns: Conscience accuses: the Law thunders: the Devil menaces: Vengeance is ready; and the Hand of Justice lifted up to fetch its stroke.

And, can there any, in this forlorn and desperate case, interpose, to shelter the trembling sinner from so great, so deserved, so imminent a destruction? Must all mankind, then, remedilessly perish? Is there no way of escape, no door of hope opened? Must we all fall a common and lamentable sacrifice to the wrath of God, and justice triumph in our eternal ruin?

Hear, O sinners! and, if the consideration of your dreadful and present danger hath left you capable of comfort; if you can yet believe there is a possibiiity that you may be happy, after such clear and full convictions that you are wretched and accursed; behold! I this day bring unto all penitent and humble souls the glad tidings of great joy: joy, which, if excess of fear and horror have not altogether stupified and made us insensible, must needs fill us

with the highest raptures of triumph and exultations. A Saviour, a Redeemer: O! sweet and precious names, for lost and undone sinners! Names, full of mercy, full of life! Justice is answered: the Law is satisfied: the Curse removed; and we restored to the hopes of eternal life and salvation; *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

These words are the very pith and marrow of the Gospel; the most comfortable news, that ever heaven sent to sinners.

And in them we have, First. Our Redemption asserted; *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law.*

Secondly. The Means how this redemption was effected; *Being made a curse for us.*

Thirdly. An irrefragable Proof, that this means, which was alone proper and effectual for our redemption, was likewise made use of by our Redeemer: for it is written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* Which cruel and accursed death because our Saviour underwent, he thereby became accursed; and a fit Redeemer, to deliver us from the curse and death threatened in the Law.

In each of these, there are many things, which we might fix our observations upon. But I shall, first, speak somewhat briefly to the third particular: and, then, return to consider the general scope and design of the Apostle in these words; without weakening such an excellent portion of Scripture so much, as to take it in pieces.

Whereas, therefore, the Apostle tells us, *It is written, Cursed is* he *that hangeth on a tree:* this he cites out of Deut. xxi. 23, where it is said, *He, that is hanged, is accursed of God.*

Here we must know, First. That this kind of death, of hanging on a tree, was variously inflicted.

Whilst the Jews had the government of their own commonwealth, whensoever they sentenced any to undergo this death,* it was in-

* Some have thought, that the Jews had not the power of life and death, when they were under the Roman Dominion, in our Saviour's time: and they ground their opinion upon that saying of the Jews, John xviii. 31; *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.* But St. Chrysostom well interprets them, Ει δε λεγουσιν ουκ εξεστιν ημιν ουδενα, κατα τον καιρον εκεινον φασιν, because it was the preparation of the Passover, v. 28. Επει ὁτι γε ανηρουν. και αλλω τροπω ανηρουν, δεικνυσιν ὁ Στεφανος λιθαζομενος. Chrysost, in Joan. xviii. 31. Which instance doth indeed prove his position: unless, perhaps, it may be asserted, that the Jews stoned St. Stephen tumultuously, without due order of Law. However, this appears from Acts xxiv. 6, where Tertullus saith, that the Jews would have judged St. Paul according to their law, for being seditious, and a profaner of the Temple; and the punishment due to such, was death. Vide Bp. Pearson on the Creed. p. 196.

flicted upon the offenders by strangling, as it is with us. But when, some time before Christ's birth, they became subject to the Roman jurisdiction, and the supreme power was devolved into their hands, they brought in another more cruel and barbarous kind of this death, very seldom (that we read of) known or used among the Jews:* and that was, crucifixion; by nailing their hands and feet to a tree erected cross-wise, and so leaving them to languish in unexpressible dolors; hanging upon the soreness of those wounds, which were made in the most sinewy, and therefore, also, the most tender and sensible parts of their bodies. Now, both these kinds of hanging are accursed deaths: both that, which the Jews inflicted, by strangling; and that, which the Romans inflicted, by crucifying.

Secondly. Whereas many other kinds of death, either were or might be made, as painful as this; yet none of them is accounted an accursed death, but only this.

We frequently read of persons sentenced to be stoned, and to be burnt alive; wherein, certainly, they suffered as much or more pain and torment, than in the Jews' way of hanging: yet neither is he, whose body is consumed in the flames, nor he, whose soul is battered out of him with stones, said to be accursed; but only he, who is hanged on a tree. It was not, therefore, the torture and painfulness of that death, which made it to be accursed. But,

Thirdly. He, that was hanged, was said to be accursed, only because, in undergoing that kind of death, he was made a type of Christ.

Who, as he was by the determinate counsel of God's will appointed to that cruel death; so, likewise, were all the curses of the Law, and all the vengeance of divine justice, to meet together upon him in suffering it. And because the Ever-Blessed Son of God was to become a wonderful and stupendous curse, when he should hang upon the cross, a woeful spectacle to men and angels; therefore, all those, who underwent such a kind of death, are said to be accursed, because resembled in that particular unto him, who was then made a curse for all mankind.

Fourthly. We must observe, that there is a twofold curse; a ceremonial or typical curse, and a moral and real one.

Not all those, who died this kind of death, were morally and really accursed: for we find, that, to one of those two thieves who

* Except by Alexander, who, at once, crucified 800 captive Jews, his countrymen, in Jerusalem itself: as Josephus relates it, lib. i. de Bello. cap. 4. And Philo lib. de Specialib. Leg. that the Jews used to crucify those, who were guilty of murder.

were crucified with our Saviour, the same cross, which proved to him an Instrument of Death, proved likewise a Tree of Life; and his being lifted up upon the Cross, was in the way to his being lifted up to Paradise. But, yet, before the death of Christ had sanctified all kinds of death to those who believe in him, this death was ceremonially and typically accursed; because it was to be the death of him, on whom the wrath and curse of God were to light, in their greatest acrimony and extremity. And, this curse being really borne by him, there is now no death that is ceremonially or typically accursed; for all types are abolished, by being fulfilled in their antitype. But, indeed, the deaths of all that die impenitently in their sins, whether they be violent or natural, of what kind soever they be, are accursed worse than typically: they are accursed morally and really. And,

Fifthly. Observe another circumstance, in that fore-mentioned place of Deuteronomy: that God takes a special care concerning the dead bodies of those, that die this kind of death; which yet he doth not for those, that die any other kind of death; *His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in anywise bury him that day.*

This likewise was a ceremonial and typical observation, fulfilled in our Saviour. For all the Four Evangelists record, that he was taken from the cross the very day of his sufferings, and committed to his sepulchre: that, according to the predictions which were before concerning him, he might be in the power and possession of the grave three days; that is, part of three; being interred on the Friday evening, and rising again on the morning of the First Day of the Week, which is Sunday, and our Christian Sabbath.

And thus you see in what sense those are said to be accursed, that are hanged on a tree: not morally nor really, unless their crimes, and impenitency in them, bring upon them the wrath of God, and the curse of the Law: but they are typically accursed, in that their death was of the same kind and after the same manner, with that which Christ was to suffer.

Now if they were accursed typically, certainly the antitype must needs be accursed really.

And, in treating of this subject, I must speak of the profoundest mysteries which the Gospel exhibits, or our religion owns.

I shall propound them to you in these Two Propositions. That JESUS CHRIST, THE EVER-BLESSED GOD, WAS MADE A CURSE FOR US. That, BEING MADE A CURSE FOR US, HE HATH REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE AND CONDEMNATION OF THE LAW.

These are the express words of my text.

I. As to the FIRST, we must enquire into Two Things. What it is to be made a curse. How Jesus Christ, who is God blessed for ever, could be made a curse.

i. WHAT IT IS, TO BE MADE A CURSE.

I answer: Although the word be here used in the abstract, to express the greatness and vehemency of that wrath, which lay upon our Saviour; yet it must be understood in the concrete. He was *made a curse*, that is, he was accursed

Now to be accursed, in its proper notion signifies, to be devoted to miseries and punishments: for we are said to curse another, when we devote, and, so far as in us lies, appoint him to plagues and miseries. And God is said to curse men, when he doth devote and appoint them to punishments. Men curse by imprecation; but God curseth, more effectually, by ordination and infliction.

But yet, notwithstanding, every one, whom God afflicts, must not be esteemed as cursed by him. Heavy calamities do, oftentimes, befal the best of men; and those, who are redeemed from the wrath of God and the curse of the Law, yet lie under the same, yea and often under far greater, temporal sorrows and sufferings, than those, who are wretched and accursed sinners. Every one, therefore, that is afflicted, is not presently accursed.

For God hath two ends, for which he brings any affliction upon us. The one, is the manifestation of his holiness: the other, is the satisfaction of his justice. And, accordingly as any affliction or suffering tends to the promoting of these ends, so it may be said to be a curse, or not.

If God afflicts us, only that his holiness might be manifested; that it might be known what a holy God we have to deal with, who so perfectly hates sin, that he will follow it with cerrections wheresoever it be found: if he afflicts us, only to rectify our exorbitancy, to prune off our luxuriances, to remind us of himself and of ourselves; both which perhaps, in a continued course of prosperity, we had well-nigh forgotten: if this be the fruit of them, to take away our sins, and to make us partakers of his holiness: let the affliction be never so sharp and heavy, though the burden of it be as much as we can possibly stand under, yet there is nothing of the malignity of the curse in it; for where afflictions make men better, God never lays them on as curses.

But, if any suffering be inflicted, as a punishment, in order to the satisfaction of divine justice, then it is properly a curse; and, how light and easy soever it be, it flows from the malediction of the Law; and, whosoever he be, that undergoes them, he is an ac-

cursed person. The Law is, *The soul, that sinneth, it shall die.* The penalty of this law is death, which ought to be taken, in its most comprehensive sense, for all sorrows and miseries, all evils and sufferings, both here and hereafter, in this world and the world to come. Now, when divine justice exacts this penalty of us as a recompense and satisfaction for our transgressing the Law, then are we properly said to be accursed.

And, therefore, by the way, all those blind methods of Popish Penance, in cruciating and tormenting the body, in order to the satisfaction of justice and expiating the guilt of their sins, are but the fond inventions of a company of men, who most preposterously seek happiness by making themselves accursed, and think to escape the vengeance of God by feeling the effects of it: for, to be accursed, is, properly, to undergo any evil or suffering; not simply, as it is painful, but as it is penal and ordained as a satisfaction to wronged and offended justice.

I have the longer insisted upon this, because it is much to be regarded; as being, indeed, the very basis and foundation of all that remains to be treated of on this subject. And from this we may borrow much light, for the clearing up of,

ii. The second thing propounded, HOW JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS GOD BLESSED FOR EVER, COULD BE MADE A CURSE, OR BECOME ACCURSED.

This, at the first glance of our thoughts upon it, seems very difficult, if not impossible, to be reconciled. And the difficulty is increased, partly, because the true faith acknowledgeth our Lord Jesus Christ to be the true God, blessed for ever; and, partly because the Apostle tells us, *That no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed:* 1 Cor. xii. 3. Yet, upon the grounds already laid, and by considering what a curse is, and upon what account any person is said to be accursed, the difficulty will soon vanish, and the reconciliation between them appear easy and obvious.

1. Then, certain it is, that *Christ is essentially blesssed,* being the most blessed God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, possessing all the infinite perfections of the Deity, invariably and unmeasurably. Yea, and he is the Fountain of all Blessing, whence flow all our hopes and happiness. And, whosoever shall, in the least, derogate from the infinite dignity of his person and essential blessedness, because he is represented to us as accursed, let such a one be himself accursed.

But, although he is for ever blessed esssentially, yet

2. *Mediatorially, he was accursed:* and that, because the economy

and dispensation of his mediatory office required, that he should be subjected unto sufferings: not only as they were simply evil; but as they were penal, and inflicted on him to this very end, that justice might be repaired and satisfied. The whole course of his humiliation, from first to last; his obscure birth and laborious education, and afflicted life; his travels, and weariness, and thirst, and hunger; his bearing the reproaches of men, and the wrath of God; but then, especially, when the whole load of it was laid upon him on the cross; were all penal, and God exacted this from him as a satisfaction and amends, that he ought to make unto offended justice. And, therefore, all those seized upon him as so many curses, wherewith he was stigmatized and branded by the divine vengeance.

iii. But, the curse of the Law being only due unto sin and guilt, it remains yet to be enquired, HOW THIS CURSE COULD BE JUSTLY INFLICTED ON OUR SAVIOUR, WHO WAS INFINITELY PURE AND INNOCENT; and to whom the Scripture gives this testimony, that he *did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:* 1 Pet. ii. 22.

To this I answer: That sin may be considered, either as personal or imputed.

1. *Christ was Free from all Personal Sin; whether of corruption of nature, or transgression of life.*

(2) He was free from all Corruption of Nature, through his miraculous conception by the Holy Ghost.

For, since the contagion of original sin was necessarily to seize on all the posterity of Adam, that descended from him in an ordinary way; therefore, that Christ might be free from this general infection, which, like a hereditary leprosy, is derived down upon all mankind in a continued succession, it pleased the infinite wisdom of God, after a wonderful and extraordinary manner, to prepare a body for him, that he might be made of the seed of Abraham, and yet not contract the sin of Adam. There was no sinful ignorance in his understanding; no seeds of rebellion, contumacy, and frowardness in his will; no tumults nor disorders in his affections: but a perfect purity and harmony in his whole soul; enjoying the same innocence, but a far greater stability, than Adam before his fall. For,

(2) As he was free from all original sin, by his extraordinary conception; so from all Actual Sin, by the hypostatical union of the divine nature with the human: whereby, being God-Man in one person, it was altogether as impossible for him to sin, as for God himself.

And, indeed, had there been but any one transgression in our Saviour he would not have been made a curse for us, but for him-

self. And, therefore, we find in the Law, that all the sacrifices, that were offered up unto God ought to be without spot and blemish; typifying unto us the spotless purity and perfection of Jesus Christ, our great propitiatory sacrifice. But,

2. Although Christ were free from all personal, yet *he was Not Free from all Imputed Sin and Guilt.* The sins of all the world assembled and met together upon him.

So that, upon this account, some have made bold, with no bad intent, to call Jesus Christ the greatest sinner that ever lived. God, as it were, raked together the filth of all the world, and spread it all upon Christ; so that never was there so much wickedness represented at once, as in his most holy and sacred person. The sins of all ages and of all persons were here contracted together. The guilt of Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, David's murder and adultery, Peter's perjury; yea, the guilt of his own crucifixion; yea, the many millions of sins, which many millions of persons have committed since the world stood, and shall commit till the final dissolution of it; were all charged upon him: and all those treasures of wrath, which were particularly due to each of these sins, were all emptied forth upon him. And, therefore, as the loose and scattered beams of the sun, though hot, and in some places scorching and intolerable, yet when they are collected into a burning-glass, become far more intense and presently fire what they touch; and, the more of them are united into one point and centre, the more sudden and fierce is the burning: so, here, although the wrath of God, as it is scattered abroad in the world, and falls upon this and that particular sinner, be terrible and insupportable; to what excess think you, must it needs arise, when all the scattered flames of it were united together in one point, all its rage and fervour twisted together into one, and that beating full upon Jesus Christ, who as in his own person he sustained the guilt of all, so in his own person he suffered the wrath and curse that was due unto all? He suffered, at once, for every one, that, which, else, every one must have suffered eternally in hell.

And thus you see how Christ is said to be made a curse, because he was ordained to sufferings; and those sufferings to the satisfaction of divine justice, and to make a recompense for sins: which, though they were not his own personally, yet they were his by imputation; God proceeding with him, as if they had all been committed by him.

iv. But, for the fuller illustration of this great mystery, TWO THINGS YET REMAIN TO BE ENQUIRED INTO. Whether it be consistent with the justice of God, to punish an innocent person, for the

sins of those that are guilty. Whether Christ did bear the same wrath and the same curse, which were due to us for our sins; or some other punishment, in lieu thereof.

1. To the *first* I answer,

(1) In general, that it is not unjust for God, to punish the sins of one person upon another, who hath not committed them.

We find frequent instances of this in the Scripture. Exod. xx. 5, God threatens, that he will visit *the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation.* And, Lam. v. 7, *Our fathers have sinned.... and we have borne their iniquities.* Canaan is accursed for the impious fact of Ham. Gen. ix. 25. Saul's children are hanged, by divine approbation, for their father's sin: 2 Sam.xxi. 1—14. Threescore and ten thousand are cut off by the sword of the destroying angel, for the pride and vain-glory of David; who also clears them from partaking in his guilt: 2 Sam. xxiv. 17, *I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done?* Many other like instances might be given, were it needful.

(2) It is just with God, to inflict the punishment of our sins upon Christ, though innocent.

And there are Two Things, upon which this justice and equity are founded: Conjunction and Consent.

[1] There is a near Conjunction, between Christ and us: upon which account, it is no injustice to punish him in our stead.

And this conjunction is twofold: either Natural, or Mystical.

1st. There is a Natural Conjunction between us, as Christ is truly man, and hath taken upon him our nature; which makes a cognation and alliance between us. We are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.

It was therefore necessary, that Christ should take our nature, upon a threefold account.

(1st.) That thereby the same person, who is God, might become passive; and a fit subject, to receive and bear the wrath of God: for, had he not been man, he could not have received it; and had he not been God, he could not have borne it.

(2dly.) That satisfaction might be made to offended justice, in the same nature which transgressed; that, as it was man which sinned, so man also might be punished. And, yet farther,

(3dly.) That the right of redemption might be in Christ, being made near of kin unto us, by his taking our flesh and our nature. For, we find in the Law, that the person, who was next of kin, was to redeem to himself the lands of his relations, when they were fallen to decay, and constrained by poverty to sell them: Lev.

xxv. 25. Ruth iii. 12. and iv. 4. Whereby was typified unto us our redemption by Jesus Christ; who, having a body prepared for him, is now become near of kin unto us, and is not ashamed to call us brethren. Now, because of this natural conjunction, the transferring the punishment from us, who are guilty, unto Christ, who is guiltless, doth, at least in this respect, answer the rules and measures of justice; that, although the same person be not punished, yet the same nature is. But this is not all: for,

2dly. There is a nearer conjunction between Christ and us: and that is Mystical; whereby we are made one person with him.

And, by reason of this, God, in punishing Christ, punisheth not only the same nature, but the same person. For there is such an intimate union by faith between Christ and a believer, that they make up but one mystical person; Christ being the Head, and we the Members; Christ the Husband, and his Church the Spouse. There is a kind of mystical union between a king and his subjects, which yet is not so near and close, as between Christ and believers: and, therefore, if it were just with God to punish the Israelites for the sin of David, their king, because of the union and relation that was between them, what show or pretence of injustice can there be, for God to punish Christ for the sins of believers, between whom this union is infinitely more intimate and embodying? But farther,

[2] As Christ is thus enjoined to us, both naturally and mystically; so he hath likewise given his full Consent, to stand in our stead, and to bear our punishment.

And, upon this account, God might justly lay upon him, not only the punishment due to the sins of those who are mystically united to him by faith; but, likewise, what was due to the sins of all the world. For, in the Covenant of Redemption, which Christ from all eternity entered into with the Father, it was agreed, that, if he would die for all, he should be the Lord of all. And, therefore, *to this end, Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living:* Rom. xiv. 9. So that, certainly, it could in no wise be unjust with God to require payment for so great a purchase: which payment was to be made by his death and sufferings. And to these he voluntarily offered himself: *No man taketh* my life *from me, but I lay it down of myself:* John x. 18. And, Heb. x. 5, 6, 7, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me)* I delight *to do thy will, O God; yea, thy Law is within my heart:* that is, the Law and constitution of the

Mediatorship, which our Lord Christ willingly and heartily submitted unto; and therefore it is said to be within his heart, that is, it was in his will and desire to effect it. And, therefore, since Christ hath been pleased to engage himself for us, and to undertake the arduous work of our redemption; and that also, when he fully knew both what his payment must be, and what his purchase; it is no injustice in God to exact the whole debt from him, since he was both sufficient and willing to discharge it.

And this is briefly in answer to the First Question, Whether it was consistent with divine justice to punish an innocent person for the sins of the guilty.

2. A *Second Question* is, Whether, as Christ suffered in our stead, so he suffered the same wrath and the same curse, that was due unto us, or some other in the stead of it.

It may seem, that the punishments that he underwent were not the same, that are threatened against us. For,

(1) The curse due to us is eternal death, and an everlating separation from the presence of God: but Christ, as he died, so he rose again; and is now infinitely glorious in the highest heavens.

(2) The punishments due to us are hellish torments; the worm of conscience that never dies, and the fire that never shall be quenched: but our Saviour Christ suffered none of these. And, those, who, of old, held, that he descended into the hell of the damned, that his soul might be there tormented with infernal pains, consider not how directly contrary this their absurd, if I may not call it impious, opinion is to our Saviour's own testimony; when, being just expiring and giving up the ghost, with infinite joy that all the sufferings of his mediatory office were now come to their full period, he breathes out his soul with this acclamation, *It is finished:* John xix. 30. And,

(3) One part of the punishment due to sinners, is hellish and utter despair, which yet never seized upon Jesus Christ: for, in his greatest dereliction, when his soul was most gloomy and overcast, when he most sadly complains of God's forsaking him; yet, even then, he fiducially appropriates God unto himself: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

And, therefore, upon all these accounts, it may seem, that Christ suffered not the same punishment, which is the due desert of our sins; and that, therefore, consequently, the same curse was not inflicted on him which was threatened against the transgressors of the Law.

For answer to this, we must carefully distinguish, between the

Substance of the curse, and the Adjuncts and Circumstances of it. For want of rightly distinguishing between these, too many have been woefully staggered and perverted in their faith; and have been induced to believe, that Christ died not in the stead of any, but only for the good of all, as the Socinians blaspheme.

Now, certain it is, that Christ underwent the very same punishment, for the Matter and Substance of it, which was due to us by the curse and threatening of the Law; though it may be different in very many Circumstances and Modifications, according to the divers natures of the subjects on whom it was to be inflicted. For, the substance of the curse and punishment threatened against sinners, is death: *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* Now, death is a copious and comprehensive word; and contains in it all manner of woes and miseries, that may be grievous unto sinners, and satisfactory to divine justice. But the justice of God being infinite, no sufferings can be satisfactory to it, but what are infinite too: for our offences are infinite in their guilt; because the object, against which we offend, is infinite in majesty and glory. The Law, therefore, threatens infinite woe and infinite wrath, to the transgressors of it. Now wrath and punishment may be infinite, either in degree, or in duration. Whichsoever it be, it is fully satisfactory to divine justice, and it drains out the full curse of the Law. Whosoever, therefore, undergoes infinite punishment, fully answers the demands of vindictive and punitive justice. But, now, Christ being himself an infinite person, underwent a punishment infinite in degrees, though not in duration and continuance: but we, being finite, yet our souls immortal, cannot bear a punishment that is infinite in degrees; and therefore it must be infinite in duration, that is, eternal. That punishment, which, if we were to suffer it, would have been drawn out unto all eternity, was all folded up together, and laid upon Christ at once, who, through the infiniteness of his person, was able to support it. And could sinners, as He did, bear and eluctate the whole punishment at once, they would thereby fully satisfy the Law, and be pronounced just and righteous. Or, if this answer of Christ's suffering infinite degrees of punishments at once, seem hard to be conceived, (although, I must confess, I cannot see but that it is perfectly consentaneous to the analogy of faith) we may yet give a second: and that is, that the infinite dignity of Christ's person, being God as well as Man, made all his sufferings likewise infinite; if not in degree, yet at least in valuation and acceptance: for an Infinite Person to suffer less, may be more satisfactory to divine justice, than for a finite person to suffer more: every part of that humiliation which Christ, the Infinite God un-

derwent, was an infinite abasement; and, consequently, an infinite punishment; and, therefore, satisfactory to an infinite justice.

So that you see, for the Matter and Substance, the punishment Christ suffered was the very same, which the Law threatened against us, viz., infinite; such as the justice of God might acquiesce in, and account itself fully recompensed by.

But, for other things, they are but differences in Circumstances, according to the different condition of Christ and us, who were both liable to the same curse. For, to be eternal, to be inflicted by material fire, and accompanied with total despair, are not essential to the punishment, nor simply necessary to make it infinite: and therefore, though these circumstances and adjuncts were not found in Christ's suffering the curse for us; yet, notwithstanding, he might and did undergo the same curse, for matter and substance, which the Law threatened against us.

And this is in answer to the Second Question.

v. Having thus shown you, that Christ was made a curse, I shall now proceed to show FOR WHOSE SAKE, HE WAS THUS ACCURSED AND PUNISHED. And that the text saith was ὑπερ ἡμων, *for us: being made a curse for us.*

Now, that Christ suffered for us, may admit a twofold interpretation. That he suffered for our Good and Benefit. That he suffered in our Place and Stead.

Each of these is true. But the former, without the latter, reacheth not the full scope of the Apostle in these words.

For the death of Christ may be considered under a threefold respect; as it was a Martyrdom: an Example: a Ransom.

Under the two former respects, it was only for our good; but, under the last, it must be in our stead, or else it could not be available.

1. I shall therefore begin with the last, as being the chief consideration of the death and sufferings of Christ, viz., that *he died in our Place and Stead, as a Ransom for us.*

Now, because this is one of the vitals of Christian Religion, a fundamental and necessary point of faith; and because also the very Deity of Jesus Christ doth usually stand or fall together with this, (both which the Socinians, whom charity itself can hardly call Christians, do most eagerly and blasphemously oppose) I shall, therefore, be the most large and particular in the confirmation of it.

(1) The first testimony which I shall alledge, is this very text, *being made a curse for us:* that is, he was accursed for us; as I have already interpreted it.

Now, to be accursed, is, as you have heard, to undergo the punishment of sin. But because Christ had no sin of his own, being infinitely holy and innocent, if he undergo the punishment of sin, one of these two things must necessarily follow. Either,

[1] That the justice of God cannot be acquitted, in inflicting punishment on Christ, who was guiltless, and therefore did not deserve them: which is blasphemy. Or,

[2] That our sins were imputed unto Christ; and so, by a voluntary susception and his own free consent, he became legally guilty, and therefore suffered the punishment which was due unto them: which is the great truth we contend for.

(2) And of the very same import is that other place, 2 Cor. v. 21, *He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.*

When Christ is said to be *made Sin for us*, nothing else can be understood by that expression, but that he was dealt with and punished as a sinner. And now, being personally righteous, (for he knew, i. e. he committed no sin) and yet being made sin, i. e. being punished for sin, it must necessarily follow, that he stood in the place and sustained the person of sinners; bearing those sins by imputation, from the real taint of which he was altogether free: or, else, we must impiously cast some imputation upon the justice of God.

(3) A third place is that of St. Peter: *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree:* 1 Pet. ii. 24. The word is ανηνεγκε: *tulit sursum: He lifted up* our sins on himself, as a load and burden which he was to undergo: a load indeed so weighty, as would have crushed and sunk any into the lowest hell; but him, who was of infinite power, and almighty to save. And, that this bearing of our sins by Christ was so as to free us from the burden and punishment of them, appears by what the Apostle presently adds, *By his stripes* ye *are healed.* And what can be more plain and express, to prove that Christ suffered in our stead? For, first, he takes our sins upon himself: i. e. he suffers the punishment due unto them: and, then, by his suffering, frees us from suffering: which is properly to suffer for us, in our place and in our stead; or, else, all sense and meaning of words is perished and lost among men.

(4) Add to this fourthly, that notable prophecy, Isa. liii. 11, unto which doubtless St. Peter here had respect: *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*

Now, to *bear iniquity*, according to the Scripture Phrase, signifies nothing else, but to bear the punishment of it: and this, saith God, shall be effectual to the justification of as many as have the *knowledge*, that is, the faith of Christ. For, *by his knowledge* he *shall*

justify, is to be taken in an objective sense: that is by being known and believed on, he shall justify many. Now, certainly, if Christ bear the iniquities of believers, so as that they themselves shall not bear them; if he suffer their punishment, so as they themselves shall not suffer; what other sense can be framed of this, but that he suffers them in their stead?

Now that to bear sin, signifies to bear the punishment of sin, may be confirmed by many places of Scripture, too numerous to be all particularly cited. Only consult Exod. xxviii. 43, And *that they bear not iniquity, and die.* Lev. xx. 17, *They shall be cut off in the sight of their people.... he shall bear his iniquity.* And so, Ezek. xviii. 20, *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son:* where, by not bearing iniquity, nothing else is meant, but that they shall not be punished for those sins, which are no ways their own.

But, howsoever, although this phrase, of bearing iniquity, were dubious; which it is not: yet, certainly, when Christ is said, so to bear our sins as to suffer for them, and by his sufferings to free us from suffering, there cannot the least doubt or suspicion remain, but that he subjected himself to punishment in our stead.

(5) Which will appear yet more clear and evident, if we consider a fifth place: and that is the aforementioned Isa. liii. 6, 7, *All we like sheep have gone astray .... and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted.* Here we find,

[1] The acknowledgment of our sins and transgressions: *We have gone astray,* and *turned every one to his own way.*

[2] That all these sins were gathered into one heap, and laid upon Christ: *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* And,

[3] That he suffered the punishment due to these sins: *He was oppressed, and afflicted.*

And how should the Spirit of God speak more expressly, to denote that he suffered in our stead the curse and wrath to which we were obnoxious? Especially, if we read the fifth verse: *He was wounded for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and, with his stripes, we were healed.*

To sum up all: since the Scripture positively affirms, that Christ was chastised for us; that he bare our sins, *i. e.* the punishment of our sins; that he was made sin for us, *i. e.* suffered the penalty due to our sins; that he was made a curse for us, *i. e.* liable to the curse and malediction of the law: when his passion is described to be so full of dolours and torments, so bloody, so painful, so ignominious,

that it might well be accounted a most severe punishment: and when, moreover, all this is said to be inflicted on him for our sins; and when we are said to be redeemed from the curse, to be freed from wrath and condemnation, to be healed, to be saved, by his blood, by his stripes, by his death: there can be no other sense affixed to these manifold clear testimonies, but that he offered himself a sacrifice for our sins, and a ransom for our souls; to bear for us that wrath and vengeance, which else we must have borne ourselves. And what else is all this, but to bear it in our stead?

Suffer me to collect the force of all these Scriptures into one argument.

He, that suffers our punishment, to that very end that we might not suffer it, doth truly and properly suffer in our stead: but Jesus Christ did suffer our punishment to that very end, that we might not suffer it: therefore, it is necessary to conclude, that he truly and properly suffered it in our stead.

I see not which of these propositions can be denied.

The first is almost self-evident; and must be assented unto by all, that understand the meaning of words.

And, for the second, which consists of two parts; That Christ hath suffered our punishment, and suffered it to this end that we might not suffer it; I have abundantly proved both out of the Scriptures.

For, First. He suffered our punishment, that is, the wrath and punishment which was due to us for our sins. It is said, he *bare our sins,* he *bare our iniquities,* he was *made sin for us,* he was *made a curse for us, the chastisement of our peace was* laid *on him,* &c., all which can signify nothing else, but that he underwent the punishment of our sins. And, indeed, since by sin death entered into the world, Christ's very dying demonstrates, that he underwent the punishment of sin: but not of his own, for he did no sin, neither was any guile found in his lips; therefore, of ours. And,

Secondly. That Christ suffered our punishment to free us from it, appears likewise, not only from the forementioned Scriptures, but from divers others also. Rom. v. 10, *We* are *reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* And, v. 9, we are *justified by his blood:* by which blood we obtain remission of sins. Matt. xxvi. 28, *This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* And, *we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:* Eph. i. 7. And very many other places might be produced for the confirmation of this, were it needful.

It is, therefore, as clear, as truth and the evidence of truth can make anything, that we obtain remission and salvation by Christ's

dying for us as a Surety, as he stood in our stead, and bare the full punishment of all our iniquities: so that, now, God can be both just in himself, and yet the justifier of sinners, who believe; having received a full satisfaction and recompense in the sufferings of his Son.

And thus much shall suffice, for this first acceptation of the particle in the text, ὑπερ ἡμων, *for us*, that is, in our place and stead.

2. Let us now consider *the sufferings of Jesus Christ, as they were for us*, i. e. *for our Good and Benefit.*

And so they fall under a twofold respect. Of a Martyrdom; and, of an Example.

(1) The death and sufferings of Christ are for our Good, as they come under the respect of a Martyrdom.

Christ died as a witness to the truth; and sealed, with his own blood, those doctrines, which he taught. And therefore we have expressed, 1 John v. 8, *There* be *three, that bear witness* on *earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood:* that is, the spirit, or life, or soul of Christ, which he breathed forth when he gave up the Ghost upon the cross; and that water and blood, which flowed in a mixed stream out of his side, when the soldier's spear opened unto us that fountain of life and salvation: these three bear witness on earth unto the truth and certainty of Christ's doctrine.

As Christ's death is an Example, so it confirms our Patience; but, as it is a Martyrdom, so it confirms our Faith. For who can rationally doubt of the great maxims of our faith, since He, that is *the Author and Finisher* of it, willingly offered up himself to so much ignominy and cruelty for the confirmation of it? What design could he be supposed to have, in imposing a false religion upon the world, who neither sought the riches, nor power, nor splendor of it: but all his doctrines, tended to make men holy, humble, patient, mortified, and self-denying; and utterly forbid and condemn all those crooked methods of fraud and injustice, by which men usually seek to grow great and mighty? Certainly, were there no other argument, besides the purity of those doctrines which our Saviour delivers, and their express contradiction to all the inordinateness of our sensual appetites and all the wicked means of promoting our secular interests; yet even this alone, to wise and judicious persons, is sufficient to evince, that they are from God. But, when the great Minister of them shall rather choose to undergo all the sufferings that the malice of men or devils could heap upon him, than not divulge them; when he shall lay down his life, and undergo the most cruel and painful death that could be inflicted, rather than retract or recant what he had delivered: this may well

cause our faith, nor to conquer atheism only, but doubts and waverings too; and to flourish into the highest degree of certainty.

And, therefore, it was an infatuated counsel of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, when they concluded, that if they should let our Saviour alone, all men would believe on him: John xi. 48. For, what else did this signify, but that they absurdly thought men would be the less apt to believe, when they had the more grounds and reasons for it? For who would not be persuaded to believe him to be a true prophet, who should both teach a holy and heavenly doctrine, and suffer death for the confirmation of it? And, therefore, saith our Saviour, John xii. 32, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

And, altogether as sottish a scoff was that, which they cast at Christ: *Come down* now *from the cross, and we will believe.* Blind wretches! Is not his martyrdom a strong motive of credibility, as well as his miracles? These, indeed, declared his authority and mission: but, by that, likewise, he declared the verity and certainty of his doctrine; and, by both, we have obtained an infallible assurance; God setting his seal by the miracles he wrought, and Christ setting his seal by the death he suffered, to the undoubted truth of those doctrines which he taught: for, had they been false, neither would God, who is truth itself, have testified for them, nor Christ have died for them; since the one is contrary to the divine goodness, and the other to common and human prudence.

Thus you see how Christ suffered for our Good and Benefit as a Martyr, in confirming our faith.

(2) The death and sufferings of Christ promote our Good, as they give us an Example of patience and self resignation to the will of our Heavenly Father.

And this the Apostle takes notice of: 1 Pet. ii. 21, *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.* And, Heb. xii. 1, 2, 3, the Apostle exhorts us, to *run with patience the race that is set before us* Although your burdens be heavy; although your way be rough, though it be strewed all with thorns; though ye be pierced through with many sorrows, torn and rent with persecutions, and wade deep in your own sweat and blood: yet, saith the Apostle, Let your patience be as great as your trials: your perseverance will, at length, overcome the one, and crown the other.

But this is a very hard lesson: how shall we learn it? Look, said the Apostle, *unto Jesus, the author and finisher of* your *faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame. Consider him, that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

And, indeed, what greater or more effectual example can be propounded to arm us with patience and fortitude, than this of the Captain of our Salvation, who was made perfect by sufferings; and calls us forth to no harder encounters, than what he himself hath already broken through. Indeed, there is no one aggravation of our sufferings, nothing that can put a sting and acrimony into them, but we shall find it so paralleled and exceeded in the sufferings of Jesus Christ, that the consideration of his patience and meekness under them should, at least, shame thee out of thy impatience and fretfulness.

Dost thou suffer, from men, indignities unworthy thy Place and Person? Look unto Jesus, the Eternal Son of the ever-glorious God. Remember, that He, who is the Great Creator and Universal Monarch of the Whole World, who hath many legions of angels in pay under him, yet meekly endured the petulant affronts of a company of vile worms. They bow the knee to him, in derision; at whose name all the powers of heaven bow, with an humble veneration. Those very hands buffet him, which he himself had made. They clad him in purple, crowned him with thorns, put a reed sceptre into his hand; and, with all the ridiculous ensigns of a mock-royalty, expose their King and their God to public scorn. And, after all the most disgraceful contumelies that spite could invent, at last they cruelly murder him, by whom they themselves live. And yet, although he was infinitely able to speak, to look, to think them into nothing, yet we find him putting forth his almighty power only in acts of patience and mercy. *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth,* but only with most sweet and melting affections to pray for them: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

Or, dost thou suffer injuries, unworthy of thy Merits and Deserts? Art thou traduced and persecuted by them, to whom thou hast been beneficial? Look unto Jesus. Remember, that he, who went about continually doing good; healing the diseases of the body by his miracles, and the more dangerous diseases of the soul by his doctrine; carrying health and salvation with him, into every house where he entered; whose whole life was nothing else but the pilgrimage of charity and good works: yet he suffers most unworthy indignities, from the ingratitude of some, whose leprosy certainly struck into their souls, when they thought their cure not worthy thanks; and, by the slanders of others, who reproached his doctrine to be blasphemy, and his miracles sorcery. And, yet, he endured

their unjust censures with infinite patience; *When he suffered, he threatened not*; and, *when he was reviled, he reviled not again.* Neither doth their injurious requital make him neglect any opportunity of doing them good: but, although their cruelty at last broke off the course of his life, yet it could not of his mercy; but he causeth blessings, pardons, and salvation, to stream out upon them, together with that blood which they despitefully shed.

Or, dost thou suffer any heavy affliction from the immediate hand of God? Doth he impoverish thy estate, or chastise thy person, or terrify thy conscience? Look unto Jesus; who, though he were the *heir of all things*, yet birds and foxes were better provided for than he: no shelter, no sustenance; not enough to pay the tribute, either to nature, or to Cæsar; but what he was beholden for, either to the charity of others, or his own miracles. Look unto Jesus; who, though he was the only beloved of his Father, yet conflicts with his wrath, till he had strained his soul into an agony: and, when he was wrapped about with horror and darkness in his spirit, and the bitter cup of his passion presented unto him with all the baleful ingredients that a revenging God could prepare, he repents not his undertaking, falls not into passion with those sins which had squeezed so much gall and wormwood into it, exclaims not against the justice of God or the injustice of men; but, with a fixed resolution, though a trembling hand, meekly takes the cup, and drinks off the very dregs and bottom of it. Look unto Jesus: trace him, by the drops of his blood, from the garden to the hall, from that to the cross: see him there hanging a ruthful spectacle to men and angels; the greatest scene of dolours and miseries, that ever was represented to the world: yet we have no complaints against God, nor threatenings against men, which are usually the impotent solace of those that suffer turbulently; but, with infinite patience, when the full end of all his sorrows was come, he bows his head, and placidly breathes out his soul. And, what! shall not this great example powerfully persuade us to patience and submission under all our sufferings? Ours are all but the least desert of our own sins; his were only the desert of ours. And shall we be any longer impatient against God, or revengeful against men? Shall we fret, and rage, and be exasperated, and fly out into all the extremes of passion and violence; when our Lord Christ himself, the infinitely holy, blessed, and glorious God, calmly endured such shame, such pain, such wrath, that the very utmost we can suffer after him, is but only a faint shadow and resemblance of it? Certainly, we do, in a great measure, make void the sufferings of Christ, and render them inef-

fectual, if we do not learn meekness and patience, by that most excellent pattern and example that he hath set before us.

And now, certainly we are, beyond measure, stupid and senseless, if the serious consideration of all the curses and miseries, which our Blessed Saviour underwent, cannot affect us with a tender mourning for his sorrows, and a holy hatred of our sins which caused them. View him from first to last, you shall find him *a man of sorrows, acquainted* and familiar *with grief.*

Was it not an infinite abasement, that the Great God should lay by his glory, eclipse his brightness, traduce himself in our flesh, and hide his deity in a lump of clay? that he should choose to be born of a mean and poor Virgin, thought but a fit match for a carpenter? And, whilst she goes great with him, that is not without some suspicion too. When he is born, the best entertainment he finds, is among beasts in a stable: a manger is his cradle; and straw or hay, the softest pillow his yearning mother can lay under him.

Well: doth his life repair the meanness of his birth? No: he is, all along, *a Man of Sorrows.* He sustains himself by a laborious calling; he, who is the great Architect of Heaven and Earth, now learns to build houses. He is hated and reviled by the Jews: some railing at him, for a glutton and a drunkard; and some, for a madman and possessed; and all, for an impostor and deceiver. He hath not of his own, where to lay his head; but is maintained only by the alms of a few well-disposed women. He is tempted by the Devil; and, afterwards, endures a far sorer temptation from his Father's wrath, the extremity of which squeezed great drops of clottered blood from him; and, at last, he is betrayed by one of his own followers.

This was the course of his life. Let us follow him to the death: and there see him hanging among malefactors, as the chiefest of them; scurrilously mocked and derided, crowned with thorns, pierced to the heart; and the precious blood trickling from his head, to overtake those other rivers that ran from his side and feet. We see him forsaken of his disciples; and, what is more, we hear him complain of being forsaken by God too. And, in the midst of all those agonies and tortures, we see him at last give up the ghost, among the insulting clamours of his upbraiding enemies.

O Blessed Saviour! what eye can refrain from weeping, what heart from bleeding? Is this the entertainment the world gives to the dearest pledge that ever God sent it? Is this thy welcome into it? Is this thy departure out of it? Shall we mock, and buffet, and scourge, and crucify, and pierce, and murder thee; and wilt thou, by these outrages committed against thee, accomplish our salvation?

O victorious love! that canst pardon, when thou art abused; that canst enliven, when thou art slaughtered; that canst exalt, when thou art abased; and canst bless, by being thyself accursed! Christ was *made a curse for us!* O riches of grace, and miracle of mercy! Can you hear all the torments and woes that he sustained? *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see,* whether ever *any sorrow* was *like unto* his *sorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted* him *in the day of his* wrath! and, therefore, neither should any thankfulness and gratitude be like to ours, who are delivered from so great a wrath by his bearing of it.

Let us go, then, and prostrate ourselves before our Gracious Saviour; admire and adore that love, which we can never comprehend; and, in the trances of our enamoured souls, yield ourselves to be swallowed up in the abyss of his divine love, the full measures of which we can no more conceive, than we could bear the wrath from which it hath delivered us.

Now to Him, that hath thus loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; to him, be glory and dominion, praise and thanksgiving, throughout all ages, world with end. Amen.

And, thus much, for the First Proposition.

II. The SECOND PROPOSITION, which I raised from the words, was this:

That CHRIST BEING THUS MADE A CURSE FOR US, AND SUFFERING ALL THE WRATH AND PUNISHMENT THAT WAS DUE UNTO US, HATH THEREBY REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE AND CONDEMNATION THREATENED IN THE LAW.

Now, here, i. Let us consider WHAT REDEMPTION IS.

Redemption, therefore, may be taken, either properly or improperly.

An Improper Redemption is a powerful rescue of a man, from under any evil or danger in which he is. Thus Jacob makes mention of *the angel which redeemed* him *from all evil:* Gen. xlviii. 16; and the disciples profess, that they hoped that Jesus had been he, who should have redeemed the Israelites from under the Roman yoke and subjection, &c.

A Proper Redemption is, by paying a price and ransom. And that, either fully equivalent: thus one kinsman was to redeem another out of servitude: Lev. xxv. 49, 50. Or, else, what is given for the redemption of another may, in itself, be of a less value; but yet is accepted as a recompense and satisfaction: thus the first-born of a man was to be redeemed; and the price paid down for him, no more than five shekels: Numb. xviii. 15, 16.

Now the redemption made for us by Christ, is a Proper Redemp-

tion, by way of price: and that price, not only reckoned valuable by acceptation; but, in itself, fully equivalent to the purchase, and compensatory to divine justice. And this redemption may be described to be our freedom from those evils, to which we stood exposed through sin, by the intervention of a full and satisfactory price.

And, here, Two things must be considered: The Price, which was paid: The Person, to whom this price was paid for our redemption.

1. The *Price*, is the Sufferings and Death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Matt. xx. 28, *The Son of Man came .... to give his life a ransom for many.* 1 Tim. ii. 6, He *gave himself a ransom for all.* And we are said to be *bought with a price:* 1 Cor. vi. 20. And what price that was, St. Peter tells us, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, *Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold .... but with the precious blood of Christ.*

And, because it is the blood of Christ, therefore it is a full and equivalent price in itself, completely satisfactory to all the demands of justice: for the infinite dignity of Christ's person, being God as well as Man, adds a valuation to his sufferings, and stamps upon them an infinite worth and merit. Hence it is called the blood of God: Acts xx. 28, *Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood:* and, certainly, the blood of God, must needs be a sufficient expiation for the sins of men. And, although the godhead of Christ itself suffered nothing, being altogether impassible; yet the person who is God suffered, and the dignity of his divine nature enhanced the sufferings which his human nature only felt. For, as the same sufferings in a king are more considerable than in a private person, although his body only, and not his title and dignity, feel them; so, likewise, the sufferings of Jesus Christ, who is God, are infinitely more considerable than the sufferings of all the creatures in heaven and earth, if God should rack and torture them to the utmost capacity of their natures: not that his divine nature receives or feels those sufferings; but only, because the person who suffers is divine.

This price of our redemption is *paid down to the Justice of God,* which is the great Creditor of all Mankind.

For, in our sinful estate, we are to be considered under a Twofold Misery. As forfeited to the wrath and justice of God. And, as in bondage to, and under the custody of, the Devil.

God is our judge, and Satan our gaoler. Now Christ hath redeemed us from both.

He hath properly redeemed us from the wrath of God, by paying

down a full and satisfactory price; and answering, to the utmost all the challenges of his justice.

And he hath improperly redeemed us from the power and possession of the Devil; who, though our judge hath acquitted us, would fain detain us as his prisoners. He hath, I say, redeemed us from him, by power and conquest; wresting out of his hands the prey, that he had greedily seized on.

And thus you see what Redemption is.

ii. The next thing shall be TO GIVE YOU SOME REASONS, AND TO SHOW YOU THE CAUSE, THAT MOVED GOD TO CONTRIVE THE METHOD OF OUR REDEMPTION, BY SUBSTITUTING HIS OWN SON TO BEAR THE PUNISHMENT OF OUR OFFENCES.

Indeed, although God's will be a sufficient Reason of his will; and his mere pleasure and constitution should satisfy our enquiries, and make us turn all our curiosity into praise and thanksgiving: yet, because it may tend much to illustrate this great mystery of grace and mercy, it will be fit for us, with all reverent modesty, to take notice of those inducements, if we may so call them, which the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to reveal unto us in the Scriptures, that inclined the Divine Will to this method of his grace.

1. God substitutes his Son to undergo our punishment, *that, thereby the exceeding Greatness of his Love towards us might be expressed and glorified.*

When God tried Abraham, he aggravated his command with many emphatical words, that must needs go to the very heart of a tender father: *Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac,* thy son *whom thou lovest.... and offer him for a burnt-offering:* Gen. xxii. 2. This heightens, as the affliction, so the expression of Abraham's love to God, in that he was willing to sacrifice the son whom he loved to the God whom he loved more. Truly, the same way God heightens and illustrates his love towards us: he takes his Son, his Only Son, the Son of his Eternal Love, and offers him up for the sins of men.

God lay under no necessity of saving us at all: as nothing accrues to him by our happiness, so nothing would have been diminished from him by our misery. Or, if he were so pleased to glorify his mercy, yet there lay no necessity upon him of saving us in so chargeable a way and manner, as by the death of his Son. He might have freed us from death, by the absolute prerogative of pardoning grace, without shedding the blood of Christ. But this, although it might have sufficed for our salvation; yet it would not suffice God's design of manifesting the riches and glory of his love unto us: and, therefore, he will not go the most saving way to work,

in accomplishing our salvation. Is it more to the advancing of his love, to part with Christ out of heaven, to make his soul an offering for sin, and his blood a ransom for sinners; than, merely, without more circumstance, to beckon them up to heaven? this, then, must be the method which the Divine Wisdom will take, because Divine Love dictates it to be most advantageous to commend itself to the hearts of men. Oh the supererogating mercy of God! that is not only content to do what is barely sufficient for our salvation; but, over and above, adds, what may be most expressive of his own affection! John iii. 16. *God so loved the world*.... How! what, to save it only? No: he so loved it, *that he gave his only begotten Son* to save it.

2. In the sufferings of Jesus Christ, *God manifests the Glory both of his Justice and Mercy; and, with infinite wisdom, reconciles them one with the other.*

Let us a little put the difficult case concerning man's salvation.

Justice and mercy lay in their different claims for sinful man. Severe Justice pleads the Law, and the curse by which the souls of Sinners are forfeited to vengeance; and, therefore, challengeth the malefactors, and is ready to drag them away to execution. Mercy interposeth; and pleads, that, if the rigorous demands of justice be heard, it must lie an obscure and neglected attribute in God's essence for ever: it alone must be excluded, when all the rest have had their share and portion of glory from man. The case is infinitely difficult, All the angels of heaven are nonplused, and can find no way to accommodate this difference: it is beyond their reach, how to satisfy justice, in the punishment of sinners; and, yet, to gratify mercy, in their pardon.

Here, now, in this gravelling case, is seen the infinite and wonderful wisdom of God. Justice demands, that man should die: "Well: my Son shall become man, and shall die under thy hands. Seize on him; and pursue him, through all the curses and plagues, which my Law threatens: only, whilst thou satisfiest thyself on the Surety, my mercy shall pardon and forgive the principals."

Think what a shout heaven gave at this decision, that found out a means to reconcile such different interests; and to satisfy and glorify both, in their contrary demands. By this means, justice is glorified in punishing the sin; and mercy likewise glorified, in pardoning the sinner. The wrath of God is discharged upon the offence; and, yet, the offender discharged from undergoing that wrath. And, therefore, we find that the Apostle gives this as the end, why God set forth Christ to be a propitiation for our sins: it was, saith he, *To declare his righteousness; that he might be just, and*

yet *the justifier of* sinners who believe: Rom. iii. 25, 26; that he might be just, in punishing them in their Surety; and merciful, in justifying them in their persons, through faith in his blood.

It is indeed disputed, whether vindictive justice be essential unto God: so that he could not have pardoned sin, but must of necessity take vengeance of every transgressor, unless he would deny himself and his own nature. Certain it is, that, since God hath declared he will punish sinners, and that the ways of every transgression shall be death, his truth and veracity do oblige him thereto: but, in itself absolutely considered, God might have pardoned the whole world, without exacting punishment, either from them or from Christ. But, since the constitution of his will is otherwise, it is all reason in the world that we should gratefully accept of his grace, in what way soever it shall please him to exhibit it; and not peevishly quarrel, whether it might not have been bestowed otherwise.

This we are certain of, that, since God hath threatened to inflict death and wrath upon the transgressors of his Law, they shall certainly suffer it, either in their own persons, or in the person of their responsible Surety: his truth obligeth his justice, to require full satisfaction from them or him. So, it is an excellent saying of St. Austin:* "So it pleased God to repair our ruin, that, neither would he leave the sin of man unpunished, because he is just; nor incurable, because he is merciful."

As to the skill of the physician, it might have been otherwise: but, to make it proper physic for the sick, and that the justice of God together with his mercy might be conserved inviolable, it could not be more fitly and artfully prepared.

Yea, by this contrivance of Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom, justice itself, which seemed so opposite to mercy, is brought over on its side, and pleads for it: for it is but just, that those, who have already suffered the penalty of the Law, should be justified and proceeded with, as righteous. But, now, every believer hath already undergone the whole penalty of the Law: he hath already made full satisfaction to the offended majesty of God: he hath done it, because Christ hath done it; and Christ and he are one, mystically united together by his Spirit and their faith: and, therefore, the justice of God, which to all wicked wretches is a dreadful enemy, in the fear of which they miserably linger out their days, is a dear and a sure friend to a believer: it pleads for him as much as mercy doth; inasmuch as it represents to God, that it is but justice in him to show them mercy.

* Serm. 3. de. Annunt. Domini.

That is, therefore, a Second Reason, why God would redeem us by the sufferings of his Son.

3. By this means also, *God most effectually expresseth his infinite Hatred and Detestation of Sin.*

For it is expedient, that God should, by some notable example, show the world how provoking a thing sin is. It is true, he hath already demonstrated his hate against it, by ruthful examples, upon all the creatures: as soon as ever the least breath of this contagion seized upon them, God turned the angels out of heaven, and man out of paradise: he subjected the whole creation unto vanity, that nothing but fears, care, sorrow, and disappointment reign here below; and under these woeful effects of the divine wrath, we groan and sigh away our days. But all these are but weak instances of so great and almighty a wrath: and their capacity is so narrow, that they can only contain some few drops of the divine indignation; and those, likewise, distilled upon them by degrees and succession. And, therefore, God is resolved to fit a vessel large enough, a subject capable enough, to contain the immense ocean of his wrath: and, because this cannot be in any finite and limited nature, God himself must be subject to the wrath of God. So infinite is his hatred against sin, that he contents not himself in punishing those, who cannot bear a punishment every way correspondent to his hatred: and, therefore, he imputes the sins of narrow-stinted creatures, to his Own Son, and prepares him a body: and, as in the great Deluge, the windows of heaven were open, and not drops or showers, but whole floods tumbled down upon the earth; so, here God openeth the whole flood-gates of his wrath, and lets the whole sea of it rush in at once upon Jesus Christ, that, by so severely punishing his Most Beloved Son, and bringing such "unknown dolours" (as the Greek Liturgy calls them) upon him, on whom was found only the imputation of our transgressions, his hatred against sin might be declared to the very utmost. And,

4. God so severely punisheth his Son, *that the extremity of his sufferings might be a Caution to us, and affect us with a holy Dread and Fear, how we provoke so just and so jealous a God.*

For, if his Own Son, dear to him as his own essence, could not escape, when he only stood in the place of sinners; how thinkest thou, O Wretch! to escape the righteous judgment of God, if thou continuest in thy sins and provocations?

See how the Apostle argues: 2 Pet. ii. 4, 9, *If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the*

old world .... bringing in the flood upon the .... ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes .... The Lord certainly *knoweth how to .... reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.* If this be a strong inference, as indeed it is, that, if God burned apostate angels and drowned an unclean world, therefore he will not spare those who continue to live ungodly: then, much more, (and tremble at it, O Sinner) if God spared not his Own Son, but prosecuted him with all the wrath and curses which the Law had denounced; how much less will he spare thee, a vile rebellious wretch, who, for thy own sins, shalt in thine own person undergo all the wrath, that God can inflict, and his power enable thee to bear.

And this our Saviour himself mentions: Luke xxiii. 31. *If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?* "If God deal so severely with me, who am a flourishing and fruitful tree, who have no sin, no rottenness of mine own; if divine justice cut me off, only for the iniquities of others imputed to me, and laid to my charge: how much more severely will he deal with you, who are dead in trespasses and sins! If his wrath kindle upon me, in whom there is no combustible matter; only, that it might take hold on me, he lays a heap of fuel about me, even the sins of all those for whom I am now to suffer: how fearfully will it prey upon, how ragingly will it consume, all the wicked of the world, who are dry stubble, and prepared fuel, and will catch at the least spark of his indignation struck into them, and burn them down to the lowest hell!"

And, therefore, O Sinner, if ever thy heart were affected, in reading the sad tragedy of the sufferings of Christ; if ever it hath drawn sighs from thy heart or tears from thine eyes, to consider what indignities, and scorns, and tortures, so holy and blessed a person underwent: affect thy heart once again with fear; and think with thyself, that all this is but a map and representation of thine own sufferings, all this wrath and vengeance is due unto thine own sins; yea, and what Christ suffered only for a while, shall lie burning upon thee and eating out thy soul, unto all eternity. He had the Almighty Godhead to support him, and angels to minister unto him and comfort him: but thou shalt have the Almighty God to crush thee, and devils to administer eternally fresh woes and torments unto thee. And, to increase the anguish of thy misery, thou shalt be ever grating upon this sad thought: That, once, thou hadst a Saviour, who suffered what thou now feelest, and who would have delivered thee from that wrath, and woe, and hell, into which thou art now plunged: but thou wretchedly refusedst the tenders of his grace and mercy; and, therefore, thou not only remedilessly, but most deservedly sufferest the vengeance of everlasting fire.

Thus, I have shown you what Redemption is; and upon what Reasons and Considerations it pleased God to constitute Jesus Christ, his Only Begotten Son, to be our Redeemer.

iii. There remains but one thing more in the Doctrinal Part of the Text, which requires explication; and, when I have briefly discussed that, I shall close up this whole subject with some Practical Inferences and Application.

Let us, then, enquire WHO THE PERSONS ARE, FOR WHOM JESUS CHRIST HATH WROUGHT OUT THIS GREAT REDEMPTION.

The text tells us, *Christ hath redeemed* US: but of what extent that particle *us* is, whether so large and universal, as to comprehend all mankind; or, else, so limited and restrained, as to denote only the elect, according to God's purpose; is still under debate and controversy.

Much, indeed, is spoken, and, I think, much mistaken, concerning the doctrine of Universal Redemption.

1. And, therefore, *to state this question aright,* let us observe,

(1) That the death of Christ may be taken, either in a more large, or in a more restrained and proper sense.

If it be understood properly, nothing else is meant thereby, but the dissolution of the union that was between his soul and body, when he gave up the ghost upon the cross. But, if we take it more largely, so it signifies, not only the separation of his soul and body, but the whole course of his life here on earth: for, indeed, life is but the beginning of dying; and death is but the end of living. Whatsoever, therefore, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, either did or suffered in his state of humiliation, by which virtue and value accrued to his merits; all that, in this question, we call by the name of his death: and that, very deservedly: because both all his acts of Obedience, and all the Sorrows and Sufferings of his afflicted life, received their worth, consummation, and obsignation, in his Death.

(2) Observe, that the death of Christ may be considered, either according to his temporal passion; or, else, according to the eternal value and acceptation of that passion.

It was inflicted in time, but accepted from all eternity. The virtue and efficacy of what he suffered in the days of his flesh was before God, from the beginning of the world; and, therefore, he is called, *The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world:* Rev. xiii. 8. So that the holy Fathers and Patriarchs, who lived many ages before Christ was born, were redeemed and saved by the very same merits as we are, who now live in the declining and almost decre-

pid age of the world. Only this difference occurs, that they were redeemed, by the acceptation of a price to be paid; but we are redeemed, by the acceptation of a price already paid. Observe,

(3) When Christ is said to die for all men, that term of universality may be taken, either *pro generibus singulorum;* or, *pro singulis generum:* either, "for all sorts and degrees of men;" or, "for all men of each sort and degree."

And, here the question doth not proceed concerning the universality of sorts and degrees: for it is agreed on all hands, that Christ died to redeem some of every sort; that is, of each sex, of every age, state, and condition among men. But the only controversy, is, concerning the other universality, viz., Whether Christ died to redeem every particular man of each sort and degree. Observe,

(4) That there is considerable a Twofold Sufficiency in the death of Christ, to redeem every person. A naked, simple, and absolute sufficiency. An ordained and appointed sufficiency.

The First is nothing else, but an equality of the price, to the debt or demands of the creditor: as a thousand talents are, in their own value, sufficient to discharge a debt of a thousand talents, though they were never offered nor intended to any such purpose.

The other Sufficiency superadds to this, the will and intention of our Redeemer, in offering this sufficient price to our creditor; to the end, that, upon the account and consideration thereof, we should be delivered and redeemed.

And, here, it is on all hands agreed, that there is, in the death and sufferings of Christ, an internal and absolute sufficiency "for the redemption of every person, of each sort and condition:" *ad singulos generum redimendos.* For, through the dignity of his person being God as well as Man, his merits were enhanced to such a redundancy, that all the creatures on earth, were their sins more and their misery greater, could never impoverish it.

The question, therefore, is, Whether the death of Christ were a price ordained by him and offered unto God, with an *intention* to redeem all and every particular person in the world.

(5) The intention of Christ's death, for the redemption and salvation of all and every particular person, may be either absolute or conditional.

And here we are agreed, that Christ, in dying, did not absolutely intend the salvation of every man.

But, yet, upon each branch of the distinction ariseth a question.

Whether Christ, in dying, did not absolutely intend the salvation of some particular persons.

Whether he did not, hypothetically and conditionally, intend the salvation of all. Observe,

(6) That it is one thing, for Christ to die for all and every one, with an intention of saving each; and another, to die for all and every one, that each may be saveable.

And here, again, the question is, Whether Christ died, not with an absolute intention (not of saving every person, but) of making every person saveable.

The resolution of which will be the more clearly given, if we observe,

(7) That those are to be accounted saveable, who lie under no impossibility of obtaining salvation; or, that have no invincible obstacle to hinder them from it.

Now there was once a twofold impossibility or obstacle of our salvation. One, respecting the impetration of it; and that was from the vindictive justice of God, requiring satisfaction for our sins. The other, respecting the application of it; and that was from our own infidelity and unbelief: for, since we lost our primitive righteousness, as a punishment of our first transgression, it would not be consistent with the rules of divine justice, to remit that part of our punishment, or to bestow upon us any habits of holiness, of which faith is one, without the intervention of a price.

And here, also, arise Three Questions:

Whether Christ, by his death, intended to satisfy the justice of God for the sins of every man in particular.

Whether Christ did not intend that his death should be so far available to all that God, without violating the order of his justice, might bestow faith and saving-grace upon all.

Whether Christ, by his death, did not intend, as to make all saveable, so to save some: to impetrate for them, and confer upon them, that faith and saving-grace, which might infallibly bring them to heaven and glory.

2. The controversy being thus stated, *we may reduce all the former subordinate questions to these two principal ones.*

(1) Whether the ransom, which Christ paid to the justice of God in his death and sufferings, was intended by him for the redemption of every particular person in the world, so as to render them all saveable, that is, that God might, without violating the order of his justice, bestow faith, and thereupon eternal salvation, on all.

(2) Whether he paid this ransom with an absolute intention, that some persons, even as many as appertain to the election of grace, should be effectually redeemed by it; purchasing for them the gift

of faith, and thereupon the reward of eternal life, and both to be actually conferred on them in their due season.

3. *Both these I affirm:* the former, to illustrate the all-sufficiency of Christ; the latter, to establish the eternal purpose of God, according to election: and, therefore, do assent to the doctrine, both of the Remonstrants and Anti-Remonstrants in what they assert in this particular; but, to neither, in what they deny. With the Remonstrant, I affirm, That Christ died for all men, with an absolute intention of rendering all and every one saveable, according to the measures of the divine justice and veracity. With the Anti-Remonstrant I affirm, That Christ died for his elect, with an absolute intention of conferring faith and salvation upon them, according to the stability of God's eternal purpose and counsel. And, certainly, whosoever shall attentively compare the forcible arguments, that each party produceth for the confirmation of these positions, with the evading answers of each unto them, must needs acknowledge, that they have not more contradicted one another, than Truth, Reason, and Scripture.

And, therefore, referring the reader to the treatises that have been written by the learned men of both persuasions, I shall only propound some principal, and, as I judge, unanswerable argument, to evince the truth of both propositions.

(1) That Christ died for all men, with an absolute intention of bringing all and every one of them into a state of salvability; from the which they were excluded by their guilt, and God's righteous judgment: and that he is not frustrated in this his intention; but, by his death, hath fully effected and accomplished it.

This will appear, if we consider,

That, otherwise, the intrinsical and absolute value of his death and merits, is not sufficient to denominate him the Saviour, the Redeemer of all men, in that sense, in which the Scripture doth frequently so style him.

For, as he cannot be named a surety for a debtor, who, though he possesseth large treasures, yet never offered them to the creditor for the payment of the debt contracted; so neither can Christ be called the Surety and the Redeemer of all men, though his blood and the treasure of his merits be of infinite worth and value, unless he offer this price of his blood unto his Father, with intention to redeem and make them saveable

Now there is nothing which occurs more frequently in the Scripture, than that Christ is called the Redeemer of those men, who yet shall never obtain eternal life and glory. So, 1 Tim. ii. 6; *Who*

gave himself a ransom for all. Heb. ii. 9; *That, by the grace of God, he might taste death for every man.* Add to these, 2 Pet. ii. 1, where the Apostle foretells, that *there shall* arise *false teachers among* them, *who* should *privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.* And, with this, consider also that famous text, 1 John ii. 2, *He is the propitiation for our sins: and, not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

If Christ, therefore, be a propitiation for all, hath tasted death for all, be a ransom for all: and many, even of those whom he hath bought and redeemed, shall yet bring upon themselves swift destruction, as these Scriptures expressly affirm; and if, on the other hand, the mere internal sufficiency of a price is not enough to constitute and denominate him the Redeemer of all, as common reason and language do abundantly testify: it remains, that his death was ordained and intended for the redemption of all; and that Christ, in offering up himself to his Father, had respect, not only to the elect, but to the reprobate; to those, who should finally perish, as well as to those, who should be saved. But, that he did not absolutely intend the salvation of all, appears as evidently, as sadly, by the event: and, therefore, he intended the salvability of all.

To this we have the testimony of another Scripture: John iii. 16; *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Here Christ is propounded as an universal gift, applicable to all: and, in the next verse, it is added, *that God sent his Son into the world ... that the world through him might be saved.* It is frivolous to object, that by *the world,* here, is meant, only the elect or believing world: for, besides that this is hugely dissonant to the scripture-phrase, which opposeth the world to the elect and believers, we find God declaring his intention in sending his Son, v. 18; *He, that believeth on him, is not condemned: but, he, that believeth not, is condemned already.* The very same world, which Christ was sent to save, consists partly of believers, partly of unbelievers; part of it to be saved, and part to be condemned: and, therefore, it cannot be restrained only to the elect world.

From all which it appears clearly, as clearly as the evidence of truth can make any thing appear, that Christ did absolutely intend to procure, by his death, the salvability of all, but their salvation only conditionally. For our faith is required as a condition, not that God should give his Son to the whole world, nor that Christ should die for all the inhabitants of it; but only, that we might obtain eternal life by him, so given and so dying.

(2) The second argument is this: The Covenant of grace is propounded to all indefinitely and universally.

Mark xvi. 16; Whosoever *believeth, shall be saved.* And, under these general terms, it may be propounded unto all, even the most desperate and forlorn sinners on earth. But, if Christ had not died for all, as well for the reprobate as the elect, this tender could not be made to all, as our Saviour commands it to be, v. 15; *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* Neither would it be true doctrine, to preach the contents of this Gospel to every man in particular, viz., That, if thou believest, thou shalt be saved: for, were it possible that, some of them should believe, yet they could not be saved, only for want of a propitiatory sacrifice; for, still, there would remain an impossibility of their salvation on the part of the vindictive justice of God, which had received no satisfaction for their sins, no payment of their debts: than which, nothing can be more absurd in divinity, and more repugnant to the nature of the Gospel-Covenant.

(3) It must needs be acknowledged, that Christ died for all men, in such a sense, as he is denied to have died for the fallen angels: then his death was not only a sufficient, but an intended ransom for all.

For the death of Christ had a sufficient worth and value in it, to have redeemed and restored them; being an infinite price, through the infinite dignity of his person. But now, it is most certain, that Christ so died for all mankind, as he did not for the last and lost angels: otherwise, why should not this proposition be true concerning them, That, if they believe, they shall be saved; which yet is most undoubtedly true, concerning the most impious persons on earth? Whence is this, but only that Christ never offered himself a sacrifice for devils; never intended, by his death, to procure savability to them; and, therefore, they are left under an eternal necessity of a most wretched estate? Since, therefore, the internal sufficiency of the price reacheth unto all, both devils and men, but the conditional promise of the Gospel, not to devils but to all men; and, since, likewise, this promise was founded upon that propitiation: it is evident, that the death of Christ was not only a ransom sufficient, but intended for all.

(4) All are bound to the great duty of believing in Christ: therefore, he died for all.

The reason of the consequence is apparent. For what is it, to believe in Christ, but to rely upon his death and merits for our salvation? at least, if this be not the full notion of Justifying Faith

yet it cannot be excluded from the nature of it. But, now, this faith cannot justly be required from those, for whom Christ died not: else, God should command men to rely upon the death and merits of him, who died not, who merited nothing for them; which is infinitely abhorrent from the seriousness and gravity of the divine commands.

(5) All men in the world are obliged to return gratitude and obedience unto Christ, upon the account and consideration of his death: therefore, his death had a respect for all.

Consult 1 Cor. vi. 20; *Ye are bought with a price:* wherefore *glorify God in your* bodies, *and in your* spirits, *which are God's.* And 2 Cor. v. 15; *He died for all, that they, which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him,* who *died for them.*

(6) And, lastly, Christ challengeth unto himself supreme authority and dominion over all, as his due, by the right of his death.

Rom. xiv. 9; *To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living.* But, if Christ's authority over all, as Mediator, be founded on his death, it will follow, that, as his authority is over all, so his death was for all; otherwise, he must exercise his jurisdiction over those persons, over whom he hath no right nor title.

Thus I have, at large, discussed these Two Doctrinal Propositions, That Christ was made a curse for us; and, That he hath redeemed us from the curse.

III. I shall now proceed to draw from them some PRACTICAL INFERENCES AND COROLLARIES.

i. Be exhorted TO ADMIRE AND ADORE THE INFINITE LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, TOWARDS FALLEN AND UNDONE MANKIND: in that he was pleased to substitute himself in our stead; and, when the hand of justice was lifted up against us, to thrust himself between us and the dread effects of the divine wrath; receiving into his own bosom all the arrows of God's quiver, every one of them dipped in the poison of the curse.

This is Love, that infinitely exceeds the utmost stretch of our conceptions; and leaves all our expressions of it tired and languishing, under the infinite weight of the theme. We can scarce speak of it without inconsistencies: or, if there were no other, yet this, at least, is an inconsistency, to attempt the declaration of a love that is unspeakable. We find the Apostle, Eph. iii. 18, praying, that they *may be able to comprehend, with all saints,* all the dimensions of this love: *what is the breadth, and length, and depth,* and *heighth* of it: and, presently, he seems to overthrow all again in the very next

next words (so hard a thing is it, congruously to express what is infinite) *and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.* And what doth this rhetorical contradiction imply, To take the measures and dimensions of what is infinite, and To know what passeth knowledge; but only, that the love of Christ is a subject, that infinitely surpasseth our capacities, and refuseth to be brought under our rules of speaking? But, yet, it is allowed our weakness, to adore what we cannot comprehend; and, where our conceptions glimmer, and our expressions falter, to eke them out with astonishment and wonder. And, indeed, it is a love full of wonders and miracles: a mysterious love, which we shall never comprehend, till it hath laid us in that bosom, were it was first kindled.

Yet, because we must not utterly silence what we cannot worthily express, (for that were to add ingratitude to weakness) suffer me to remark unto you some few particulars, which put a mighty accent and emphasis upon this love of Christ.

1. Consider *the infinite Glory and Dignity of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Glorious, in the very same degree with his Eternal Father: co-equal and co-essential with him: arrayed with light and majesty: controlling all the powers of heaven; who, with an awful reverence, bow at his dread commands, and with a winged speed, fulfil his pleasure. Yea, the Apostle hath almost racked and tortured language for an expression of it: Heb. i. 3. He is *the brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express image of his Person.* Why! what is glory, but the lustre of excellence? Brightness itself is but the streaming forth of glory. So that, to be the brightness of his Father's glory, is to be the glory of his glory. It was a high and excellent conception of that philosophy, who said, That light was but the shadow of God: if, then, God's shadow be so pure and radiant, how infinitely illustrious is his brightness; and the brightness of that, which is most illustrious in God, his glory?

And, yet, this bright and glorious God was pleased to eclipse his light, lay aside his rays, and immure himself in a house of clay. He, who was *in the form of God,* took upon him *the form of a servant.* He, who *thought it not robbery to be equal with God,* thought it no shame to be made inferior to the angels, by becoming man; yea, and inferior to men, by becoming a curse for them.

And, certainly, if our love be commended and heightened by the great advantages we quit for the sake of others, how infinitely inexpressible must the love of Christ towards us be! Who, being the Ever-Blessed God by whose power all things were created and do subsist, dwelling in unapproachable light and glory, attended

with legions of angels—that he should be pleased to forsake his palace, discard his retinue, shrink up himself into a poor helpless infant, shroud and veil all his Godhead, but only what sometimes displayed itself in the miracles which he wrought, and scarce more in these than in his patient suffering—what could persuade him to so great an abasement, but only the greatness of his love: for love is of an assimilating and transforming nature: and, therefore, saith the Apostle, Heb. ii. 14; *Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself .... took part of the same; that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, t' at is, the Devil: And deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.*

2. Consider, as his infinite glory, so *our Infinite Vileness and Wretchedness.*

And this will likewise extol the exceeding riches of his love, that the Great and Glorious God should be made a curse for us; and so infinitely humble and abase himself, as to rake us off the dunghill, and advance us to sit with himself in heavenly places.

(1) We are vile, in our Original; being but kneaded together of a little coagulated mud and dirt: and,

(2) Loathsome, for our Deformity; wallowing in our blood and filth, and cast forth to the loathing of our persons.

But, yet, in this forlorn estate, when no eye pitied us, that eye, which is pity itself, had compassion upon us; and, when he saw us polluted in our blood, said unto us, *Live.* This, to the God of Love, *was a time of love:* and, so infinitely tender were his compassions towards us, that, to wash away our blood, he shed his own. Our deformity was total, and had overspread our whole man: Isa. i. 6; *From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there* was no sound part in us; *but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores:* sores, that did deform us: and sores, that would destroy us. And, oh, the exceeding love of Christ, that he should descend from heaven, to bind up, to cure, to kiss the very sores and ulcers of such loathsome creatures as we are!

(3) We are hateful for our Rebellions: sinning against that very love and mercy, which saves us: affronting and slighting that Redeemer, who offers his blood, his merits, himself, his all, unto us; and is not so much grieved at his own sufferings, as at our rejecting of them.

Nothing in the world sooner provokes love, than contempt: it can weather out any other difficulties; but this breaks its heart. And yet Christ foresaw all the indignities he should undergo, from

such froward wretches as we are; how he would first shed his blood and then trample upon it; provoke his justice, and then despise his mercy: and yet he comes to redeem such perverse and obstinate creatures; and is made a curse for us, who have ten thousand times deserved to be accursed. Our Saviour commends his love unto us: John xv. 13; *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* Yes, O Lord, thou thyself hast had greater love than this; in that thou hast laid down thy life, not for friends only, but for enemies; *For* whilst *we were* yet *enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son:* Rom. v. 10. Let me add,

(4) One discriminating passage in this love of Christ, which doth exceedingly magnify and enhance it: he was made a curse for us, and not for the fallen angels.

They are creatures of a far greater natural excellency and perfection, than we are; and would, upon their restoration, more mightily have advanced the glory of Christ, than we can: the same price of redemption, which was paid down for us, was in itself abundantly sufficient for their recovery. But, yet, oh, the infinite severity of God! they are for ever excluded for the benefit of redemption; and are *reserved in chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* And we, (such is the infinite love and mercy of our Blessed God) we are redeemed by a price, that doth infinitely exceed and outbid the purchase. And this, doubtless adds to the eternal anguish of those proud spirits, that they should be hurled out of heaven for one sin, and condemned to everlasting torments; though they were the light, the beauty, and flower of the creation: and should be so undervalued by God, as not to be thought worth the redeeming, when yet vile man, the scum and dregs of the earth, guilty of innumerable sins against God, is again restored, not only to the same estate from whence he fell, but to the hopes and assurances of an infinitely better. And, therefore, in their extreme horror and rage, we hear them crying out, Matt. viii. 29; "*What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* We have nothing to do with thy coming, so as to expect ease and relief. No: thy beloved, though vile, creature man engrosseth all the benefits of thy coming: and that blood of thine, which is more than enough to redeem him, must rather run waste, than be derived to us; and therefore, thy coming is nothing unto us, but only to torment and despite us."

3. The infinite love of Christ, in being made a curse for us, is mightily glorified, if we consider, not only what he was, and who we are; but *the several bitter and direful Ingredients, that compounded the Curse, which was laid upon him.*

His sufferings were as great and doleful, as the envenomed spite of men and the fiery wrath of God could prepare them. From the one, he suffers scorns, reproaches, stripes, buffetings, and death itself; with all the mockery and contempt, that could be added to them. From the other, he suffers fears, and desertion, and agonies, and terrors; in that excessive measure, which none but himself ever knew, who was a man acquainted with sorrow, and none but himself could bear.

And, shall it not, then, affect and even break our hearts, to think, that every one of us has largely contributed to his sorrows? that we should conspire, with the accursed Jews, to give him gall and vinegar in his passion; and to add more load to his pressures, who was so unmeasurably afflicted and oppressed? Think what full measures of woe and wrath the sins but of any one of us, who is least guilty and least of all obnoxious to the revenging justice of God, do deserve; how intolerable that hell is, which is due to the most innocent amongst us: and then consider, how infinite and unsufferable all that mixture of wrath must be, which Christ underwent, not for thy sins only, but for all the multiplied offences of the whole world: and you will find the sum to amount to such an excess of torments, that only an Infinite God could inflict, and only an Infinite God sustain. And, is not all this demonstrative of the highest love? Nothing could be a motive to undergo this wrath, but love. And, therefore, well might the Apostle speak, 1 John iii. 16; *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.*

Go, then, O Soul! prostrate thyself before the Gracious Saviour. Admire and adore that love which thou canst not comprehend: and, in the trances of a holy ecstasy, yield thyself to be swallowed up in the abyss of his divine love, the full measures of which thou canst no more conceive, than thou canst bear that wrath from which it hath delivered thee.

That is the First Use.

iii. IF CHRIST HATH THUS BORNE THE CURSE FOR US, WHY SHOULD WE THINK IT MUCH TO BEAR THE CROSS FOR HIM?

What disingenuity is it, to think any thing too much to suffer for that Blessed Redeemer, who thought nothing too much to suffer for us? Art thou mocked and scoffed; or mayest thou hereafter be called forth to severer trials, to imprisonment, banishment, loss of estate, yea, or it may be, to lay down thy life for the testimony of Jesus? and will thou stick at this, or think much of it, when it is for the sake of thy Dearest Saviour, who hath, for thy sake, under-

gone ten thousand times more acute dolors and tortures, than any that the rage of man can inflict upon thee, or thou canst possibly bear? Certainly, thou art altogether unworthy to reap any fruit or benefit by his death, who shalt refuse to follow him in the path he hath traced out for thee by his own blood, although he should require it from thee to bedew it with thine.

iii. Is Christ made a curse for us? then *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith* the Lord. *Speak ye comfortably to Jesusalem;* say *unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand, double for all her sins:* Isa. xl. 1, 2. Here is ABUNDANT SATISFACTION MADE TO THE JUSTICE OF GOD FOR ALL THE TRANSGRESSIONS OF TRUE BELIEVERS. They, by their Surety, have paid to the full, yea, and supererogated in his sufferings.

For God could never have been so completely satisfied, in exacting the penalty from us in our own persons, as now he is, by the punishments laid upon his Own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. For those very sufferings of thy Saviour, which were an expiation for the sins of the whole world, were all of them tendered to the Father as an expiation for thine; and the full value of his infinite satisfaction belongs all of it entirely unto thee. And, therefore, look upon thy sins as horrid and heinous as thou canst; yet, unless thine in particular have been more than the sins of all the world, unless thine have been more sinful than sin itself can be, know, for thy comfort, that a full atonement is made; and now nothing is expected from thee, but only to accept it, and to walk worthy of it.

DISCOURSES CONCERNING SIN.

I.

THE FOLLY OF SINNERS IN MAKING A MOCK AT SIN.

Fools make a mock at sin. PROV. xiv. 9.

WE are not generally to expect any connexion, either of sense or sentences, in this Book of the Proverbs. Other parts of Scripture are like a rich mine; where the precious ore runs along in one continued vein: but this is like a heap of pearls; which, though they are loose and unstrung, are not therefore the less excellent or valuable.

The Text which I have now read, is one of them: an entire proposition in itself; without relation to, or dependence upon, any context. In it, we have these things considerable.

1. The CHARACTER or Periphrasis of wicked and ungodly men: and they are said to be such, *as make a mock at sin.*

II. Here is the CENSURE passed upon them by the all-wise God, and the wisest of men: they are Fools for so doing: *Fools make a mock at sin.*

I. Their CHARACTER: they *make a mock at sin.*

The words are plain and obvious: only the phrase, of making a mock, may seem subject to some ambiguity and various acceptations; and, indeed, the Scripture useth it in divers senses.

Sometimes, it signifies an abusing of others, by violent and lewd actions: so we read that the Hebrew servant, says Potiphar's wife, *came in unto me to mock me:* Gen. xxxix. 17. Sometimes, it signifies an exposing of men to shame and dishonour: so the Wise Man tells us, *Wine is a mocker:* Prov. xx. 1. Sometimes, it signifies an imposing upon the credulity of others, things that seem incredible and impossible: so we read in Genesis, when Lot had declared to his sons-in law the destruction of Sodom, it is said, *he seemed unto* them *as one that mocked:* Gen. xix. 14. Sometimes, it is taken for a failing in our promises; and, thereby, defeating and frustrating the expectations of others: and, thus, Herod is said to be *mocked* by *the wise men:* Matt. ii. 16.

But none of these are at all congruous to our present purpose, nor applicable to the words of the Text.

There are, therefore, two other acceptations of this expression, frequently occurring in the Holy Scriptures.

i. This word *mock* is commonly taken from SCOFFING, or BITTER TAUNTING AT OTHERS.

Thus our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ suffered the flouts and derisions of an insolent rabble, who *set him at nought, and mocked him,* as St. Luke speaks: chap. xxiii. 11. Thus those blessed Martyrs and Confessors, that followed his steps, are said to have endured the *trials of cruel mockings,* as the Apostle tells. Heb. xi. 36. And, indeed, this is the difference, between a wise reprover and a bitter mocker: that the words of one are like *balm,* both soft and sanative; but the words of the other are like *sharp swords,* which cut deep into the minds of men, and commonly make them rankle into hatred and malice. And, doubtless, there are very many spirits, which can sooner put up an injury done them, than a cutting, bitter scoff; because nothing expresseth so much contempt, nor shows so much how despicable we account them, as a fleering gibe.

ii. Mocking may be taken for SLIGHTING, AND MAKING NO ACCOUNT OF; LOOKING UPON THINGS OR PERSONS, AS TRIVIAL AND INCONSIDERABLE.

And, thus, it is used in Job, where the horse is said to *mock at fear,* when he rusheth into the battle, and is not terrified; but rather enraged by all the horrors of war, when *the quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield:* Job xxxix. 22, 23. And so it is said of the Leviathan, Job xli. 27, 29; *He laugheth at the shaking of a spear:* for *he esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.*

II. In either of these two senses, may the words of the Text be taken; when they tell us, they are FOOLS that *make a mock at sin.*

For sin may be considered, either as committed by others, or as committed by ourselves: and it is egregious folly to make a mock of either; so as to sport at the one, or to slight the other.

They are *Fools,* that *make a mock* at other men's sins; so as to turn them into a matter of jest and raillery. They are *Fools,* that *make a mock* at their own sins; so as to consider the commission of them a slight and inconsiderable thing. I shall very briefly speak of the First, and so pass on unto the Second particular.

i. They are Fools, THAT MHKE A MOCK AT OTHER MEN'S SINS; SO AS TO MAKE THEM A MATTER OF MIRTH AND PASTIME.

This, indeed, is a sport for devils; all whose recreation and hellish solace, is the sin and wickedness of men. The damnation of souls is the sport of hell: and thou, who canst rejoice in their joy, deservest likewise to howl under their woes and torments.

We justly condemn it, as a most barbarous and inhuman custom amongst the ancient Romans, who brought many selected pairs of miserable men into their public theatres, only to delight the spectators with their blood and death. But this was an innocent recreation, in comparison of thine, who takest pleasure to see thy poor brother wounding and stabbing, yea damning his precious soul.

Go, laugh at a wretched man upon the rack, or upon the wheel: laugh at the odd, distorted postures of epilepticks; or the convulsive motions of dying and expiring men: sport thyself with their writhed looks, and antic shapes of misery. This is far more civil, more humane, more pious, than to make those sins thy mirth, which will be thy brother's eternal woe and anguish.

What thinkest thou? Couldst thou look into hell, that place of torment; couldst thou see there all the engines of God's justice and the Devil's cruelty, set on work in the eternal torture of those, who perhaps once made as light of their own sins, as thou dost of other men's; wouldst thou think this a pleasant spectacle? Wouldst thou sport and divert thyself, to see how they wallow in fire and brimstone, or how they circle and twist themselves in unquenchable flames? Certainly, such a sight as this would affect thee with a cold

horror and shivering dread. And how then canst thou sport thyself, to see thy brother damning himself, since it would fright thee to see him damned?

Believe it, Sirs, the sins, that now abound in the world, challenge our tears and pity. We ought to mourn and repent for those, who do not, who will not repent for themselves. It is a sad and a doleful sight, to see so many every where dishonour God, disgrace their natures, and destroy their souls: to see some come reeling home, disguised in all the brutish shapes that drunkenness can put upon them, ready to discharge their vomit in the face of every one they meet; others, frantic with wrath and rage, and like a company of madmen, flinging about *firebrands, arrows, and death:* Prov. xxvi. 18: to see such woeful transformations, and the dire effects that sin and wickedness have caused in the world. Certainly, he, that can entertain himself with mirth at these things, hath not only forsworn his religion, but his humanity; and may, with much more reason, make the miseries of poor distracted people, chained up in Bedlam, to become his sport and pastime.

I know it will be here pretended, that, surely, it can be no such great crime to explode and hiss sin off the stage; nay, it were a proper means to keep men from being generally so wicked, could we but make wickedness more ridiculous in them.

But, alas! vice is now a-days grown too impudent to be laughed out of countenance: and those methods of a scurrilous mockery, which some plead for, as rendering vice ridiculous, have, I doubt, only made it the more taking and spreading; and encouraged others to be the more openly sinful, by teaching them to be the more wittily vile and wicked. Few will be deterred from sinning, when they think they shall but gratify others, by making sport for them; and stir up, not their indignation and abhorrence, but their mirth and laughter.

It is true, we read that Elijah mocked the idolatrous worshippers of Baal: and his scoffs and taunts at them were very biting and sarcastical; and cut them much deeper, than they are said to cut themselves. But this he did in a serious and zealous reproving of their sins; not in a jocular and sportive merriment.

There are two things in sin, Impiety and Folly. We may lawfully enough scorn the one, while we are sure to hate and detest the other: and a due mixture of both these together, scorn and detestation, are very fit to enkindle our zeal for God; and may oftentimes be a requisite temper for him, who is to reprove confident and audacious sinners. But, to laugh and sport at others'

wickedness, and to make the guilt and shame of others our mirth and recreation, is both unchristian and inhuman; and we may as well laugh at their damnation, as at that which will lead them to it. Thus to *make a mock at sin*, is to make our very mocks to be our sins: and argues us, not only profane, but foolish: for this is to laugh and rejoice at our own stain and dishonour, and to abuse our own natures; that nature, which is common to us, as well as others, that nature, which, were it not debased with sin, renders us but *a little lower than the angels.*

What a fair and glorious creature was man, before sin debased and sullied him! A friend to his God; lord of the creation; made *a little lower than the angels*, being a-kin to them, though of a younger house and meaner extract; adorned with all both natural and divine perfections, till sin despoiled him of his excellency, and made him, who was almost *equal to the angels*, worse than the very brutes that perish, sottish and miserable. And canst thou laugh and sport thyself at that, which hath ruined and undone thee, as well as others? Thy nature is blemished and corrupted, as much as theirs. When we look abroad in the world, and observe the abominable wickednesses that are every where committed; the murders, uncleannesses, blasphemies, drunkenness, and all those prodigies of impiety, that every where swarm amongst men; how *by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out*, until *blood toucheth blood:* Hos. iv. 2; what else see we now in all this, but the woeful effects of our own corrupt nature? Here we see ourselves unbowelled; and discover what we ourselves are, at the price of other men's sins: for, *as in water, face answereth to face; so* doth *the heart of man to man:* Prov xxvii. 19. We have, therefore, more reason to lament the sins and miscarriages of others, than to make a sport and mock at their wickedness: since we ourselves are the very same; and prone enough, without the restraining grace of God, either to imitate or exceed them. Hence, then,

1. Consider *what an accursed, horrid thing it is, to tempt others to sin, only that thou mayest afterwards make sport with them, and raise a scene of mirth out of the ruins of their souls.*

I wish this were not as common a practice, as it is damnable. See what dreadful woes God denounceth against such, by the Prophet: Hab. ii. 15, 16: *Woe unto him, that giveth his neighbour drink; that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken, also, that thou mayest look on* his *nakedness;* his shame and dishonour. *Thou art filled with shame, for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned unto thee,*

and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory. Hence have these devils (for that name belongs to them, who do his work) invented all those artifices of excess and drunkenness, to draw on others to debauch themselves and their reason, that they may have matter to laugh at their sottish actions, and to boast how many they have made to fall under the puissance of their riots. But, certainly, if there be a hell, as it is certain there is: or if that hell were not made in vain, as it was not; these wretched sinners can expect nothing else, but to have their portion therein with those devils, whose industrious factors they have been: and, there, the cup of God's right hand, a cup of pure wrath and unmixed fury, shall be given them; and they shall be forced to drink it off, to the very dregs.

2. Hence, *think how desperately impious, wicked wretches they are, who sin only to make others sport; that buffoon themselves into hell, and purchase the pleasing of others with the dreadful damnation of their own souls.*

And, yet, how frequent is this in the world! How many are there, that will neither spare God, nor Heaven, nor Scripture, nor Religion, nor common Modesty, if they come but in the way of a jest! Nothing, how sacred, how venerable soever it be, can escape them, if they can but turn it into drollery. I need not mention what tropes and metaphors men have found out to talk lasciviously by: almost every one is perfect in that piece of rhetoric. Nor what strange, monstrous lies some will aver openly, to raise either mirth or wonder in company. And that, which is worst of all, is, that now the Holy Bible is become a mere jest book with them; a common-place for wit and merry discourses; and the Devil again speaks Scripture out of these men's mouths: they know no more of it, than what they abuse; and all their meditations and comments upon it, are only how such and such passages may be ingeniously perverted and turned into burlesque, to heighten the mirth of the next profane company they meet. Impious wretches! that dare to violate the most tremendous mysteries of religion; and expose their God to scorn, his oracles to contempt, and their own souls to eternal perdition: only for a little grinning and sneering of a company of vain, yea mad Fools, who think they commence wits by applauding blasphemy! But these wits, as they are profane and impious, so they prove themselves very fools, thus to sport themselves to death: their laughter is rather spasmodical and convulsive, than joyous; a *Risus Sardonicus*, caused by venom and poison: they go down merrily to hell, and frolic themselves into perdition.

And, thus, I have done with the First sort of *Fools;* namely, those, that make a sport and mock at other men's sins.

ii. The Second particular is to show, that they are Fools, WHO MAKE A MOCK AT THEIR OWN SINS: SO AS TO THINK THE COMMISSION OF THEM BUT A SLIGHT, INCONSIDERABLE MATTER.

And here I shall show you, That wicked men do generally account sin a small, slight matter. What it is, that induceth and persuadeth them to account so slight of it. Their gross and inexcusable folly, for so accounting of it.

1. *That wicked men do generally account sin a small, inconsiderable matter*, may appear from these Three things.

(1) Slight provocations and easy temptations, are sufficient to make them rush boldly into the commission of sin.

Any slight inconsiderable gain, and transitory, fading, washy pleasure; yea, oftentimes, a mere gallantry and humour of sinning; is enough to make them venture upon any crime, that the Devil or their own wicked hearts shall suggest to them. Yea, those very things, for which they would scarce suffer a hair of their heads to be twitched off, are yet forcible enough, to persuade them to lie or swear: sins, that murder and destroy their precious souls for ever! What is this, but a plain demonstration, that they account sin a mere trifle; and look upon it as a small and slight thing, to offend the Most High God?

(2) It is very hard and difficult, to work these men to any true sorrow and compunction for their sins.

Turn the mouth of all the terrible threatenings, that God hath denounced in his Holy Word against them; and let them thunder out all the woes and curses, that are in the magazine of God's justice against them: yet these wicked wretches are not startled at it; but still hold fast their confidence and boldness, when they have lost their innocency and integrity, and cannot nor will not be persuaded that God should be so angry and incensed for such small matters.

(3) If they are at all moved with these things; yet they think that a slight and formal repentance will suffice to make amends for all.

They pacify their consciences, and think they appease God also, by crying him mercy; and find it as easy a matter to repent of their sins, as it is to commit them. And therefore, certainly, these men must needs have very slight thoughts of sin, who can be so easily tempted to commit it, and are so hard to be brought to repent of it: or, if they do, yet it is so slightly and superficially, as if they feared the amends would be greater than the injury.

2. I come now to the Second thing: and that is, to show *what it is, that induceth and persuadeth wicked men, to make so light of their sins.*

Now there are these Two things, that make sinners to account their sins slight and trivial matters.

(1) Because they see so few instances of God's dread wrath and vengeance executed on sinners in this life: and those rare ones, that are extant and visible, they impute rather to chance, than to the retribution of divine justice.

And, therefore, upon their own impunity and the impunity of others, they conclude, that certainly sin is no such heinous thing as some sour, tetrical people would fain persuade the world to believe: and so they cry Peace, Peace, to themselves, though they go on in the frowardness of their hearts, adding iniquity to sin: Deut. xxix. 19. Because God so long winks at them, they conclude him blind; or, at least, that he doth not much disallow those sins, which he doth not presently punish. Indeed, it would be somewhat difficult to answer this argument, were this present life the appointed time of recompense: no; but God reserveth his wrath and vengeance to a more public and more dreadful execution of it, than any can be in this life. Though now thou feelest no effects of God's wrath; yet, believe it, the storm is but all this while gathering: but, when thou launchest forth into the boundless ocean of eternity, then, and perhaps never before then, will it break upon thee in a tempest of fury, and drown thy soul in perdition and destruction.

(2) Another thing, that makes wicked men think so slight of sin, is, that it cannot affect God with any real injury: for, as he is not benefited by our services, so he is not wronged by our iniquities.

It is true, could our sins reach God, could they dethrone him or rend off any of his glorious attributes from his immutable essence, there might then be great reason why God should so severely revenge them, and we for ever detest and abhor them: but, since his glory is free from any stain, and his being from any wrong and prejudice, our sins are nothing to him; nor is there any reason we should judge them heinous and provoking.

It is true, O Sinner, thy sins can never invade God's essence: that is infinitely above the attempts of men or devils. But, yet, every wicked wretch would, if he could, dethrone God. Sinners would not have him be so holy, nor so just, as he is; not so holy in hating of their sins, nor so just in punishing of them: that is, they would not have him to be God; for it is necessary that God should be as he is. Sinners do really contradict God's purity, rebel against his sovereignty, violate his commands, defy his justice, provoke his mercy, despise his threatenings, and hinder the manifestations of his glory to the world. And is all this nothing? Every sinner hath

so much poison and venom in him, that he would even spit it in the face of God himself, if he could reach him: but, because God is in himself secure from their impotent assaults, sin shows its spite against him in what it can; defaceth his image wherever it comes; abolisheth all structures and lineaments of God in the soul; and would banish his name, his fear, his worship from off the face of the whole earth. And, therefore, thou, who art guilty of this rebellion against the Great Majesty of Heaven, canst thou yet think thy sins be slight and inconsiderable; and not worth, either the cognizance or the vengeance of the Almighty? Believe it, the day is coming, and will not tarry, when that guilt, which thou now carriest so peaceably in thy bosom; and which, like a frozen and benumbed serpent, stirs not, nor stings not; shall, when heated with the flames of hell, fly in thy face, and appear in all its native and genuine deformities and horror, and overwhelm thy soul with everlasting anguish and torment: and, then, but too late, then wilt thou exclaim against thyself, as being worse than a fool or madman, for thinking so slightly of and making a mock at that, which hath eternally ruined and destroyed thee.

And, having thus showed you briefly, that wicked men do make light of sin, and the inducements that tempt them to it, I shall now,

3. Show you *their great and inexcusable Folly in so doing.*

And, certainly, never was any insensate man, never any that was wholly abandoned by his reason and understanding, guilty of a greater folly than this is. For,

(1) Is it not most egregious folly and madness, for any to do that, which yet they hope they shall live to repent that ever they did?

This is such a folly, as all the extravagancies of fools could never match: and yet this, most wicked men are guilty of. They boldly rush into sin, only upon this presumptuous confidence, that they may hereafter be sorry that now they did it.

In which, their folly is doubly notorious: In that they venture upon a certain guilt, in hope of an uncertain repentance. And, In that they take up their unprofitable sins, upon so great and burdensome an interest.

[1] In that they venture upon a certain guilt, in hopes of an uncertain repentance.

For, either God may cut thee off, O Sinner, in the very act of that sin, which thou intendest to repent of hereafter: or, if he afford thee time for repentance, he may withhold his grace; and, in his just and righteous, but yet fearful judgment, seal thee up under hardness and impenitency, that thou shalt go on, treasuring *up unto*

thyself wrath against the day of wrath: Rom. ii. 5. And if either of these, through the righteous judgment of God, should happen unto thee, what a deplorable fool wilt thou prove thyself to be, that sinnest out of hopes of repentance, and of a repentance which perhaps will never be granted! Alas! how many hath God, in his signal vengeance, cut off, by some remarkable stroke; with an oath, or curse, or blasphemy in their mouths, scarce fully pronounced! How many, with their drunken vomits in their very throats! How many, while their souls have been burning with their lustful embraces, have even then been cast into hell, and burnt up with everlasting fire! Or, if vengeance should spare thee for a while, O Sinner, yet thou knowest not how soon it will strike thee. It is great folly to expect the warning of a sick bed: death often surprises by sudden casualties, or by some diseases as sudden as casualties; and there are many ways of dying, besides consumptions, agues, and dropsies, the lingering forerunners of an approaching dissolution. But, if God should cast thee down upon a sick bed, he may justly visit thee, who hast neglected thy soul in thy health, with such distempers as may make thee not only unfit, but such as may render the incapable of doing thy last kind office of it. It is folly to expect the admonition of old age. Alas! *the almond*-tree doth not every where *flourish:* Eccl. xii. 5; and it is not one, to many thousands, that lays down a *hoary head* in the bed of the grave: Prov. xvi. 31. But, grant thou couldst be assured of the continuance of thy life; yet, is it not egregious folly, to sin in hope of repenting; when every act of sin will make thy repentance the more difficult, if not impossible? the older thou growest, still the more desperate is thy case: for thy sins will be the more rooted and habituated in thee, and thy heart the more hardened to resist the grace of God: so that, upon all accounts, thy repentance is most uncertain; and, the longer thou continuest in sin, still the more unlikely and improbable. And then judge, thou thyself, whether it be not extreme madness and folly, to make so light, or no account of sinning, because thou makest account of repenting. But,

[2] Suppose it were most infallibly certain, that thou shalt repent; yet none, but Fools, will take up the pleasures of sin upon the sorrow, anguish, and bitterness of a true and hearty repentance.

Dost thou seriously consider what Repentance is? It is not a transitory wish; a warm sigh; or a languishing "Lord, have mercy," in a distress, or on a sick bed: and yet even these cannot be without judging and condemning themselves for Fools, when they sinned. No: but repentance is the breaking of the heart: a rending

of the very soul in pieces. The usual preparatives to it are ghastly fears and terrors, sharp and dreadful convictions, that will even search thy very bowels, break thy bones, and burn up thy very marrow within thee. More especially doth God deal thus terribly with veteran, old, confirmed sinners; making repentance more bitter to them than to others, that they may see and confess themselves Fools, in indulging themselves in their sins, in hopes of repenting for them. Say, then, when the Devil and thine own lusts tempt thee to any sin; say, "If I commit this sin, either I shall repent of it, or I shall not: if I never repent of it, as it is a hazard whether I shall or no, what is there in sin, that can recompense the everlasting pain of damnation? If I shall repent, what is there in the sin, that can recompense the anguish and bitterness of repentance?" This is such an unanswerable dilemma, that all the craft and subtlety of hell can never solve. And, if we would but always keep this fixed in our minds, it were impossible that ever we should make light of sin. While thou thus arguest solidly and wisely: but, to say "I will sin, because perhaps I may repent," is quite below the meanest capacity, that ever owned the least glimpse of sense and reason.

(2) Is it not folly to make a mock at that, which will be sure to pay thee home, and to make a public mock and scorn of thee to the whole world?

How many have their sins and vices made infamous among men! They are a shame and reproach to all, that are but of a civil and sober converse; and as much lost to reputation, as they are to virtue. But however, certainly all wicked and ungodly men shall be made a public scorn and derision to all the world, both God, angels, and men. God will mock at them: he tells them so expressly: for so the Wise Man speaks: Prov. i. 25, 26; Because *ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity,* and *mock when your fear cometh: When your fear cometh as a desolation, and your destruction cometh* like *a whirlwind.* All their sins and deeds of wickedness shall then be exposed to the open view and contempt of Saints and Angels, who shall subscribe to the righteous doom of their condemnation. Devils will then upbraid their folly; and triumph, that they have outwitted them into the same most miserable and deplorable state with themselves. Think now, O Sinner! how wilt thou be able to hold up thy guilty head, and thy amazed and confounded face? Whither, oh whither canst thou cause thy shame to go, when men and angels shall point and hiss at thee; and thy folly shall be proclaimed as loud as the last trumpet, which heaven and earth and all the world shall hear?

(3) Is it not the foolishness of folly itself, to make light of that, which will for ever damn thee?

Art thou such an idiot, as to account hell a trifle, and damnation itself a slight matter? What is it then, that makes thee think sin so small and trifling a thing? For hell, and death, and eternal wrath are certainly entailed upon it. Consider what a most cutting reflection it will be to thee in hell, when thou shalt for ever cry out upon and curse thyself for a wretched Fool, that ever thou shouldst make light of those sins which would damn thee. What was there in them, for which thou hast forfeited heaven and everlasting happiness; but only a little impure, brutish pleasure? And, now that it is passed and gone, what remains of them; but only the bitter remembrances? Certainly, thou wilt, ten thousand times, and for ever, call thyself an accursed Fool for so doing, when it is too late to help it. Be persuaded therefore now, to be wise betimes for your souls: else you also will, when there is no redress, curse your own folly, that hath brought upon you all those extremities of woe and anguish.

II.

THE GREAT EVIL AND DANGER OF LITTLE SINS.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. MATT. v. 19.

AMONGST those many points, that our Saviour handles in this his Sermon on the Mount, one is the stability and permanency of the Moral Law; the obligation of which, he affirms to be as perpetual as heaven and earth: v. 18; *Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled.*

This assertion Christ lays down, in opposition to the common and corrupt doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, the Jewish teachers; who, by their traditions sought to make void the Law of God. Now, says Christ, unless they can remove the earth, and roll up the heavens, and carry the world without the world, it is but a vain attempt; for it is decreed in heaven, that *till heaven and earth pass,* not a *tittle* of *the Law shall* fail; but *all* shall *be fulfilled.*

As it is in this lower world; notwithstanding it is maintained by a continual flux and vicissitude, by the perpetual change of one being into another; one corrupting, and another rising up in a new form and shape out of its ruins; and yet not the least dust of matter

is or can be consumed, but the same matter and the same quantity still continue which were at first created: so is it with the Law of God: let Scribes and Pharisees corrupt it by their erroneous glosses and false interpretations, putting what forms and shapes they please upon it; yet, as it is in the corruption of earthly bodies, not the least piece of matter can perish or be annihilated, so neither in their corrupting of the Law, shall one jot or tittle of it fail. Not but that the Law did fail of its observation: never yet was it exactly and punctually fulfilled by any, except by our Lord Jesus Christ; but, yet, the obligation and binding power of it is everlasting, and shall continue while there is an earth and men upon it, yea while there is a heaven and glorified saints in it. For the Moral Law is of an eternal validity: on earth, it is a perfect rule, set down in the word: in heaven, it is a perfect nature, implanted in the blessed; from which all their actions shall flow, and by which they shall all be guided to eternity.

This assertion being laid down, our Saviour proceeds to draw an inference from it. And that he doth in the words of the text. If every jot and tittle of the Law be of such a permanent and everlasting obligation; then, *whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called,* that is, he shall be, or he deserves to be, *the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

I. And, here, before we can arrive at the full and practical sense of the words, we must ENQUIRE INTO TWO THINGS.

What is here meant by *the Least Commandment.* What is meant by being *least in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

i. For the FIRST of these.

1. When Christ speaks here of the Least Commandment, *it must not be so understood, as if one Commandment were less necessary to be observed than another.*

God's Commands are all alike necessary: and that, with a twofold necessity; *necessitate præcepti,* and *necessitate medii.* The one ariseth from the authority of the Lawgiver: the other, from the requisiteness of obedience to eternal life.

One Command, therefore, is not less than another.

(1) In respect of the Authority enjoining them.

The same holy and just God, who hath commanded us to love and fear him with all our souls and with all our might, hath also commanded us to abstain from every vain thought, and from every idle and superfluous word. The Least Command hath power to bind the conscience to obedience, as well as the greatest; because the least is enacted by that Sovereign God, to whom all souls and

consciences are subject, as well as the greatest. It is not the greatness or smallness of the coin, but the image of the king stamped upon it, that authorizes it, and makes it current: so, truly, the holiness and purity of God's nature once imprinted upon the Least Command, make it fully as authoritative and obligatory, as if it were the highest and the chief. Nor,

(2) Is one Command less than another, as if it were less necessary to be performed in order to Eternal Life.

The breach of the Least Commandment doth as certainly shut the soul out of heaven, and shut it up under wrath and condemnation, as the breach of the greatest.

In neither of these senses, therefore, must the words be understood; as if our obedience were required more remissly, or left more arbitrary, to the one than to the other; or as if the observation of them all were not equally conducible unto happiness, or the transgression of them equally liable unto punishment.

2. When, therefore, Christ speaks of the Least Commandment, *the expression may admit of a twofold signification.*

(1) That herein he alludes to the common and corrupt doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, distinguishing God's Commands into great and small.

The Great Commandments they held to be those only, which concerned the external acts of religious worship; such as fastings, and washings, and sacrifices, and scrupulous tithings, with various gifts and offerings: these were their Great Commandments. But, for inward concupiscence, for unmortified lusts, for vain thoughts and sinful desires, these, they, as a generation, corrupt in themselves and corrupters of others, taught, as the Papists now do, either to be no sins at all; or, at most, but venial, so long as they did not break forth into act. And, truly, the greater part of this chapter is spent in setting forth the evil of those sins, that the Jews accounted to be light and small: as, to be *angry with* our *brother*, to call him *Raca*, or *Thou Fool:* v. 22; to harbour inward motions of concupiscence: v. 28; to use divorce: v. 32; common swearing: v. 34; private revenge: v. 39. Now, says our Saviour, I am so far from destroying the Law and the Prophets, either by my doctrine or by my practice, as these men falsely accuse and calumniate me; that, contrariwise, I teach that the violation of those Commands, which your Doctors, the Scribes and Pharisees, account small and little, will bring with them a heavy guilt and sore condemnation: for, whosoever breaks those Commandments, that are commonly vilified and called least, *shall be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

(2) Those Commandments, which are great, in respect of the Lawgiver, may yet be the least, in comparison with other Commands of the same Law, which are indeed thought greatest.

Now this comparative inequality in the Commandments is taken from the inequality of the objects, about which they are conversant. Some of them concern our duty to God: others concern our duty to Man. Now because man is infinitely less than God, therefore those Commands, that relate to our duty towards man, may be called less than those Commands, that relate to our duty towards God. Hence, when the lawyer put a case to our Saviour, Matt. xxii. 36; *Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?* our Lord answers him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This,* says he, *is the first and great commandment.*

Sometimes, this inequality ariseth from the latitude, that every Command hath in it. This latitude relateth to our thoughts, to our words, and to our actions. Now because a thought may be said to be less than a word, and a word may be said to be less than an action; therefore, that part of the Commandment, that requires holiness in our thoughts, may be said to be less than that, which requires holiness in our speech; and that part of the Commandment, which requires holiness in our speech, than that, which requires holiness in our lives and actions.

Now, says our Saviour, he, that sins against man, as well as he, that sins against God; he, that sins in a thought, in a word, as well as he, that sins in his actions and conversation; he, that breaks these *least commandments, shall be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.* And, in this sense, I take the words.

And thus you see what is meant by the Least Commandment.

ii. The Second thing we are to inquire into, is, WHAT WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND, BY BEING THE LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

By the Kingdom of Heaven may be meant, either the Kingdom of Grace set up in the Church on earth; and thus the word is so frequently made use of in Scripture, that I need not turn you to any places: or, else, by the Kingdom of Heaven may be meant the Kingdom of Glory, established in the highest heavens.

If we take the Kingdom of Heaven here in the Text for the Kingdom of Grace, that is, for the Church and people of God here on earth, then the sense runs thus: He, that breaketh the least commandment, and teacheth men so, shall be no true member of the Church of Christ.

But, if we take the Kingdom of Heaven here spoken of to be the

Kingdom of Glory, then the meaning is, He, that breaks the least commandment, *shall be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven;* that is, he shall not enter into heaven at all; *Minimus vocabitur in Regno Cœlorum; et fortasse ideo non erit in Regno Cœlorum, ubi nisi magni esse non possunt;* as St. Augustin speaks: "He shall be the least in heaven; that is, he shall not be there at all, because in heaven there are none but great and glorious ones."

You see, then, what a heavy and most dreadful doom Christ hath passed upon those things, that the world call little and trivial sins: they exclude out of heaven; and will, without repentance and a pardon interpose, sink the soul down to the lowest hell irrecoverably.

Now, because the generality of the world, yea and of professors also, do too commonly allow and indulge themselves in Little Sins, I have therefore made choice of this subject, on purpose to convince you, if it may be, of the great evil that lurks under them, and that great wrath that will follow upon them: that, as you would, out of your great care for your precious and immortal soul's eternal welfare, abstain from the commission of notorious and self-condemning sins; so you would labour to keep yourselves free from these Little Sins, which, though less scandalous, yet are not less pernicious and destructive.

And this I shall endeavour to do, in the prosecution of this one Proposition.

THAT LITTLE SINS CARRY IN THEM GREAT GUILT, AND WILL BRING AFTER THEM A SORE AND HEAVY CONDEMNATION.

He, that breaketh the least commandment, shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

II. In treating upon this subject, because I intend not to insist long upon it, I shall only lay down some DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE TRUTH OF THE DOCTRINE, and then make some Use and Application of it.

i. The great evil and danger that there is in Little Sins appears in this, that THE LEAST SIN IS A MOST HIGH AFFRONT AND PROVOCATION OF THE GREAT GOD. An infinite holiness is opposed, and an infinite justice is incensed, by them.

Though I am not of the opinion of the Stoic Philosophers, that all vices are equally heinous: yet this I account certain; that there is, in the least sin, as flat a repugnancy and contradiction to the holy will of God, as in the greatest.

Hath not God forbidden vain thoughts and idle words, as strictly as he hath forbidden murder, adultery, blasphemy, and hatred of himself, with all those abominable sins that defile the mouths of

those that name them? And is it not as much his will, that he should be obeyed in those commands, as in these? Have you any more dispensation in the Scripture to speak an idle word, than you have to blaspheme the Name of God? have you any more liberty allowed you to swear little oaths, than you have to swear and ban by whatsoever is sacred and holy in heaven or dreadful in hell? or to take the reverend Name of God in vain, more than to curse him to his very face? are you more permitted to think evil against your neighbour, than you are to murder him? No, certainly: no such dispensations can ever be found in the word of God: and, I assure you, God will never dispense with any sin, farther than he hath revealed; and why then will you dare to dispense with yourselves more in Little Sins, than in Great Sins?

"Oh, our consciences will never bear with any patience those great and crying sins."

Will they not? and do you think that God's holiness will bear with your Little Sins? Believe it, these Little Sins do arm God's terrible power and vengeance against you. And, as a page may carry the sword of a great warrior after him, so your Little Sins do, as it were, bear the sword of God's justice, and put it into his hands against you. And woe unto us, if the holy and jealous God deal in fury with us, for our small provocations.

ii. EVERY LITTLE SIN IS A HEINOUS VIOLATION OF A HOLY AND STRICT LAW, THAT GOD HATH GIVEN US TO BE THE RULE OF OUR LIVES.

The least sin takes the Two Tables, and, in a worse sense than Moses did, dashes and breaks them in pieces. Nay,

iii. That you may see what a complicate evil every sin is, take this too; which, though it be a paradox, yet is a most sad truth; that THE COMMISSION OF THE LEAST SIN MAKES YOU GUILTY OF THE GREATEST SIN; YEA, GUILTY OF ALL SIN IMAGINABLE.

Hear this, therefore, and tremble, all you that allow yourselves in vain thoughts, or idle words; and think with yourselves "Pish! this is but a thought: this is but a word." No: it is not only a vain thought, or an idle word: it is blasphemy: it is hatred of God: it is murder: it is adultery: it is idolatry. You will say, "This is strange doctrine." If it be, it is the Apostle's doctrine: James ii. 10; *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

As, therefore, thou wouldst not be found guilty in the Great Day of the Lord of all that even hell itself was ever impeached for, see that you abhor the commission of the least sin; for the least

sin will involve thy soul in the greatest guilt. And the Apostle gives an evident reason of this: ver. 11; *For he, that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the Law.*

The worst thing, that can be found in all the sins that ever were committed, is the contempt of God's authority. Now there is as much wretched contempt of the authority of the Great God, in the commission of Little Sins, as there is in the commission of Great Sins. It is the same God, that saith, Do not take my name in vain, who saith, Do not blaspheme me: the same God, that saith, Do not murder, hath said also, Be not angry with thy brother causelessly. Now what is it, that makes blasphemy and murder such heinous sins? Truly, the venom and rancour of them lie in this, That the authority of that Great God, who hath forbidden them, is slighted and trampled under foot; and is it not so by Small Sins? Nay, let me add,

iv. THE AUTHORITY OF THE GREAT GOD SEEMS TO BE MORE DESPISED BY THE COMMISSION OF SMALL SINS, THAN BY THE COMMISSION OF GREAT SINS.

Doth it not argue great contempt of God, when you will not obey him in a matter, that you yourselves count small and inconsiderable? You think, it may be, it is not of much moment or concernment what your thoughts be, nor what your words are: but, when you hear and are convinced, that all your thoughts should be holy, and that all your discourse should be savoury, and such as should minister profit and edification unto others; if, after this, you still think it of no great moment, whether they be vain and frothy, or whether they be holy and spiritual; believe it, this shows you to be despisers of God's dominion and authority over you, when his Commands cannot prevail against the least sin. "What a small matter was it," may some say, "for Adam to eat of an apple in paradise!" But, was it not as small a matter for him to forbear and let it alone? And, therefore, this Small Sin shewed no small contempt of God's authority, who had strictly forbidden it.

When we sin, we flatter ourselves straight with this; "Is it not a little one?" Truly, if it be but a little one to commit, it is but a little one to refrain from. It is an aggravation of sin, rather than an excuse, to say, our sins are but little ones. It shows a heart hardened against God, and bewrays a desperate contempt of all that he can say to us or do against us, when we shall choose rather to thwart and break his commands, to venture on or rather to despise his power, wrath, and justice, than to forego our Little Sins.

v. LITTLE SINS DO GREATLY DEFACE THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE SOUL.

Adam was at first created according to the similitude and likeness of God: he had the divine portraiture drawn upon his soul, by the creating finger of the Almighty: and yet we see how little a sin defaced it, and spoiled him of all his glory. In curious pictures, a small scratch is a great deformity: certainly, the image of God is such a curious piece of workmanship, that the least scratch or flaw in it by the least sin deforms and turns that, which before was the image of God, into the image of the Devil.

vi. LITTLE SINS HAVE IN THEM, ORDINARILY, LESS OF TEMPTATION THAN OTHER SINS HAVE; AND, THEREFORE, THEY HAVE MORE OF WILFULNESS IN THEM.

If it be no excuse of sin, yet certainly it is a ground of pity and commiseration, when those fall into the commission of sin, who are assaulted and haunted with most violent and eager temptations: when the Devil will not let them alone for a moment's time, but pursues them from place to place; and, though they once and again reject and resist him, yet still he forceth his temptations upon them. If such as these are at length overcome by those impudent importunities of that Evil One, this their yielding requires our pity: and, it may be, shall more easily obtain God's pardoning grace and mercy.

But thou, that ordinarily committest those that thou callest Little Sins, hast no such alleviation for them. What temptation canst thou plead? Doth the Devil continually dog thee with such solicitations and persuasions, that, though thou wouldst, yet thou canst not resist. No, certainly: when the powers of hell arm themselves against a soul, it is to more advantage, than the commission of a Little Sin. Little Sins have scarce any other temptation to enforce them, besides the commonness and customariness of committing them.

The two great arguments, by which the Devil prevails in all his temptations, are Pleasure and Profit. Now both of these do usually attend the big and more bulky sins: but Little Sins have usually this aggravation left upon them, that, if men will commit them, they shall become sinners for nothing.

Tell me, what profit hath the profane spirit to be continually stewing and soaking a lust in his own thoughts? What profit or pleasure hath the common swearer, for to think himself to be but a little sinner, in rapping out his oaths against God and heaven? "Were I an epicure," says one both piously and ingeniously, "I would hate swearing." Were men such, as sold themselves unto all manner of sensual delights; yet so little can be strained from this common sin, that it can hardly bear the countenance or pretence of a temptation.

Now if it be not the violence of temptation, that makes you to sin, it can be nothing else, but your own wilfulness, that makes you thus to sin. Wilfulness is the measure of all guilt: according as your sins are more or less wilful, so are you the more or less sinful. Now it is not the Devil's temptations, but your own wilfulness, that runs you upon the commission of Little Sins; and this is it, that aggravates and heightens them: you sin voluntarily, without compulsion; and so, by mystery of iniquity, you make yourselves great sinners by committing Little Sins.

vii. LITTLE SINS DO MAINTAIN THE TRADE AND COURSE OF SINNING.

The Devil cannot expect always to receive such returns of great and crying impieties: but yet, when he keeps the stock of corruption going, and drives on the trade of sinning by Lesser Sins; believe it, corruption will be on the thriving hand, and you may grow rich in guilt and treasure up to yourselves wrath against the day of wrath, by adding those that you call Little Sins unto the heap.

It is not possible, that any sinner in the world should be always raging against God, by daring and staring sins: for though the principle of corruption aims still to exert its utmost strength; yet the faculties, in which it dwells and by which it acts, cannot bear so constant an intentness. There must be, therefore, in the vilest sinners, some intermission. But, yet, in this intermission there is the continued practice and course of small sins, that tack and unite them together: betwixt the commission of one gross sin and another, intervene a constant neglect and forgetfulness of God, a constant hardness of heart, a constant vanity and unfruitfulness of life; and, by these, though sinners look upon them as small sins, yet they still plod on in the way of hell and destruction without any stop or interruption. In sharp diseases, the violence of the fit doth not last so long as the disease lasts: at times, there is an intermission; but still there is a constant distemper in the body: so when the pang of a violent sin is well over; yet still there remains a constant distemper in the soul, which, though it be not outrageous, yet still continues the soul's disease, and will bring it to its death at last. In the fortification of a city or town, all the ramparts, are not castles and strong-holds; but, between fort and fort, there is a line drawn, that doth, as it were, join all together and make the place impregnable: so is it in the fortification of the soul by sin: all sins are not strong-holds of Satan: they are greater and grosser sins; but, between these, is drawn a line of smaller sins, so close, that you cannot find a breach in it; and, by these, the heart is fenced against God.

Now, is it nothing, that your Little Sins fill up all the void

spaces of your lives? Is it nothing, that you no where lie open to the force and impression of the Holy Spirit? He, by his convictions, batters the greater and more heinous sins of your lives; but these strong-holds of Satan are impregnable, and give him the repulse. He seeks to enter in by the thoughts; but these are so fortified by vanity and earthly-mindedness, and a thousand other follies, that, though they are but little sins, yet swarms of them stop up the passage; and the soul is so full already, that there is no room for the Holy Spirit to enter.

There is not a sinner here, if he will make an impartial search within himself, but will find the experience of this in his own breast. When, at any time, you have flown out into the commission of any boisterous and notorious wickedness, have you not afterwards found, that you lived in a more constant liking and allowance of Little Sins? When once a man is stunned by some heavy blow, a small nip or pinch is not then felt by him: and, when once conscience is deadened by the stroke of some great and scandalous sin, afterwards it grows less sensible of the guilt and evil that there is in smaller sins: and thus you live in them without pain and regret, till you fall into some notorious wickedness, that more hardens the heart and more sears the conscience; and what is this, but to run round from sin to sin, from a small sin to a great sin, and from a great sin to a small sin again, till hell put a period to this circle? What is this now, but for the Devil to get ground upon you by Great Sins, and to keep it by Little Sins, whereby he drives on and keeps up the trade of Sin? And, when God shall cast up your accounts for you at the Last Day, you will find that the trade hath gained you no small loss, even the loss of your immortal souls.

III. Now, although the evil and danger of committing Little Sins hath been made very apparent in the forementioned particulars, yet, because men are very prone to indulge and excuse themselves herein, I shall add SOME FARTHER DEMONSTRATIONS OF THEIR AGGRAVATED GUILT in these following particulars: which will serve greatly for the confirmation of the truth of the doctrine.

i. Consider, LITTLE SINS USUALLY ARE THE DAMNING AND DESTROYING SINS.

There are more, beyond comparison, that perish and go down to hell by the commission of Little Sins, than by those that are more notorious and infamous.

Here, perisheth the Hypocrite; and, here, the Formal Professor. Here, perisheth your Honest, Civil, Neighbourly Man; that is so

fair and upright in his dealing, that you can see nothing that is gross and scandalous by him: oh! but yet the blood of their precious and immortal souls runs out and is spilt for ever, through those insensible wounds, that Little Sins do make. Yea hereby commonly perisheth the Profane Sinner also: for it is usually but the commission of one Small Sin more, that fills up the measure of his iniquities, and makes him fully ripe for damnation.

Sometimes, indeed, God doth, by some signal stroke of his vengeance, strike the sinner through and through in the commission of some bold and daring sin; but, usually, the last sin of the worst of men is but of the lesser size: and, though God hath formerly borne many great impieties from such persons; yet is he, at last, so provoked by some Little Sin, that he will wait no longer, but snatches the sinner away in his wrath and throws him down into hell.

This is an argument how dreadfully provoking Small Sins are, that, usually, upon the commission of one of them, God puts an end to his patience and forbearance. It is not all the great and crying sins of a man's life, that bring so much misery upon him, as a Little Sin, that sinks him down into eternal torments, doth. Usually, the last sin, that a sinner enters into hell by, is but a Little Sin.

Take it, therefore, as a warning from God: henceforth, never more despise any sin as slight, because it is small. We have a known proverb among us, That when a beast hath his full load, one straw more will break his back. Believe it, Sirs, it is most certainly true in the present case. Many, Christians, have been a long time sinners against God and their own souls, adding iniquity to iniquity; and some of you may already have your full load: oh, beware how you ever venture upon the commission of another sin: though it be but a little and a slight sin; yet this slight and small sin, added to the rest, may sink you for ever into hell: this Little Sin may fill up the ephah of your iniquities; and, after this Small Sin, you may neither have time to sin again, nor to repent of your sin.

ii. Consider this: SMALL SINS, WHAT THEY WANT IN WEIGHT, USUALLY THEY DO MORE THAN MAKE UP IN NUMBER; and, therefore, are as pernicious to the soul, as the greatest sins can be.

Hence David prays, Ps. xix. 12; *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret* sins. Secret sins must needs be the least and smallest sins; seeing they are so small, that he, that commits them, cannot discern them: but yet, as they are small, so are they numerous: Who knows how often he thus transgresseth? *Who can understand his errors?* Therefore, *cleanse thou me,* O Lord, *from* these *secret* sins.

A ship may have a heavy burden of sands, as well as of millstones; and may be as soon sunk with them. And, truly, Small Sins, though they should be as small as sands; yet, commonly, are as numerous as the sands too: and what odds then is there between them and the greatest sins? Every thought thou thinkest, and every word thou speakest, in an unregenerate state and condition, there is sin in it: and, though most of them, possibly, are but Little Sins; yet a multitude of them, alone, are able to sink you down into the lowest hell.

Your consciences start back and are affrighted, as indeed they ought, at a temptation to murder, incest, blasphemy; or any of those more horrid sins, that are the prodigies of corrupt nature. These sins you dare not so much as commit once: and, yet, thousands of thousands of lesser sins, such as sinful thoughts, idle words, petty oaths, commodious lies; these proceed from you, without either striving against them, or mourning for them.

Sirs, do you more fear intolerable and everlasting wrath, for the single commission of a great sin, than you do for the frequent and repeated commission of less sins? Truly, I cannot precisely tell you, whether you had not as good blaspheme God once, as take his name in vain often; whether it be not as good to murder once, as to hate always.

The frequency of Little Sins makes their guilt so great and their punishment so intolerable, that the vilest sins you can imagine shall have nothing to exceed them in, unless it be the horror of the name of that sin. And yet it fares with us, as it did with the Israelites: we tremble more at one Goliath, than we do at the whole army of the Philistines. One gross scandalous sin makes conscience recoil and go back; when yet we venture upon the numberless guilt of smaller sins, that have less terror in their name, though, united in their guilt, they bring far sorer condemnation on the soul, than the single commission of a great sin. What great difference is there, whether your eternal burning be kindled by many sparks, or by one fire-brand? whether you die by many smaller wounds, or by one great one? Many little items may make a debt desperate and the payment impossible. And, truly, when God shall reckon up against us at the Great Day, many thousand vain thoughts, and as many superfluous idle words, with as many petty oaths and lies that we have been guilty of, the account will be as dreadful, and the wrath that will follow as insupportable, as if murder, blasphemy, or the greatest outrage that ever was committed in the world were singly charged upon us.

iii. Consider, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT, TO CONVINCE MEN OF THE GREAT EVIL AND DANGER, THAT THERE IS IN LITTLE SINS: and, therefore, it is very difficult, to bring them to repentance for them.

Indeed, this is the great and desperate evil that there is in Small Sins, that men will not be persuaded that they are evil. Flagitious wickednesses are usually self-condemning: they carry that brand upon them, that makes it evident to every man's conscience, that they come from hell, and will certainly lead to hell; and, therefore, the Apostle, Rom. i. 32, after he had reckoned up a black catalogue of sins, tells them, in the last verse, that though they were heathens, yet they knew *the judgment of God, that they, which* committed *such things* were *worthy of death.* But the guilt of Little Sins is not so apparent: the eye of a mere natural conscience looks usually outward, to the life and conversation; and, if that be plain and smooth, it sees not or dispenseth with the Lesser Sins of the heart: hence is it, that we so seldom confess or mourn for those, that we call Lesser Sins. When is it, that we are deeply humbled for the omission of duties, or for the slight and perfunctory performance of them? these we look not upon, as deserving damnation; and, therefore, we think they need no repentance.

Nay, are we not so far from judging and condemning ourselves for them, that we seek our pretences to excuse and lessen them, calling them slips, failings, and unavoidable infirmities; and, as Lot said of Zoar, *Is it not a little one, and* our souls *shall live?* Gen. xix. 20. "What! can I think there is so much danger, in a foolish thought, in a vain and inconsiderate word? Can I think that the Great God will torment his poor creatures for ever, for a thought, for a word, for a glance?" Yes, believe it, unless these sins be done away in the blood of Christ, there is not the least of them but hath an infinite evil in it, and an infinite wrath following of it. If you will not now be convinced of it, you shall be then, when, with dread and astonishment, you shall hear God calling your Little Sins by other names than you now do: you call them failings and infirmities, but God will call them presumptions and rebellions. What you say is but a vain thought, shall be arraigned as treason against God, as atheism and soul-murder. Then, every formal heartless duty, that here you performed, shall be accused of mocking and scoffing of God: they are so interpretatively, and in God's esteem; and, unless the guilt of them be done away by the blood of sprinkling, you will find them no less at *the great and terrible day of the Lord.*

Indeed, the generality of men have gotten a dangerous method of doing away the guilt of their sins. Great Sins they make to be

little, and Little Sins they make to be none at all; and, thus, they do away their sins: and, so, they live in them customarily, and die in them impenitently, and perish under them irrecoverably.

iv. Consider, that THE ALLOWANCE AND CORDIAL APPROBATION BUT OF THE LEAST SIN, IS A CERTAIN SIGN OF A MOST ROTTEN AND HYPOCRITICAL HEART.

Be thy conversation never so blameless, be thy profession never so glorious, be thy duties and services never so pompous; yet, if there be the secret reservation and allowance but of the least sin, all this is no more than so much vain show and pageantry.

What says the Apostle? James i. 26; *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue,* that man *deceiveth* himself, his *religion is vain.* Why, is it not strange, that, after so many prayers daily put up to God, after an eminent profession and a considerable progress made in the ways of God, that yet both the sincerity and success of all this should depend upon so small a thing as the tip of a man's tongue? If that be allowed to run at random into impertinencies, not to say into debaucheries and profaneness, all your duties, all your prayers, all your profession, are blown away by the same tongue that uttered them, and all your religion will be in vain.

And, let me add, this seeming religion will end only in shame and confusion, at the last: when the soul and conscience of a sinner shall be ripped open at the Great Day, before men and angels; and that Little Sin, that kept God and Christ and eternal salvation out, shall openly be showed to all the world, and laughed at by all the world; that such a sin should keep a man from heaven and eternal happiness. And, therefore, says David, Ps. cxix. 6; *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.* To have respect to some of God's Commandments, and not to all, is now hypocrisy, and will at last be shame and confusion.

It is a most certain truth, that though the commission of the Greatest Sin be consistent with the truth of grace; yet so is not the approbation of the Least Sin. Oh! what a severe and critical thing is true holiness, that will no more allow the least transgression than the greatest; nor more tolerate the defilement of dust in our hearts, than a dunghill. We have all of us need, therefore, to pray with David, Ps. cxxxix. 23; *Search me,* O Lord, *and* try *my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; And see if there be any* evil *way in me:* because our sins may be so little, as to escape our own search; and because the least sin, if let alone in the heart, will, like a small speck in fruit, spread to a total rottenness; therefore, O Lord, do

thou *search* and *try* us, and if there be any way of wickedness, in us, cast thou out our corruptions, that so thou mayest not cast us out as corrupt and rotten at the last.

v. Consider, LITTLE SINS DO USUALLY MAKE WAY AND OPEN A PASSAGE INTO THE HEART, FOR THE GREATEST AND VILEST SINS.

Thus, a little thief, that creeps in at the window, may unlock the door for others, that stand without. And thus it fared with David: while sensual delight crept in by the eye at the sight of Bathsheba, it opened his heart to the temptation, and in rushed those two outrageous sins of adultery and murder. Believe it, there is no sin so small, but it tends to the utmost wickedness, that can possibly be committed: an irreverent thought of God, tends to no less than blasphemy and Atheism: a slight grudge at another, tends to no less than murder: a lascivious thought, tends to no less than impudent and common prostitution: and though, at first, they seem to play only singly about the heart; yet, within a while, they will mortally wound it.

There are Two things, which give Little Sins their growth and increase.

1. *The Devil, by his temptations, is continually nursing up youngling sins, till they arrive to a full strength and stature of wickedness.*

He is continually suiting occasions and temptations to the propensions of our lusts. Hath he wrought any sinful desire, or any evil purpose in you? he will take care you shall not long want an occasion to fulfil it. Were it not for his vigilancy, many a sin must needs die in the womb, that conceived it; but, as it was conceived by his temptations, so is it brought forth by his industry and diligence.

2. *Natural Corruption itself is of a thriving, growing nature.*

If any lust hath seized strongly on the thoughts, and boils there, it will vent itself in discourse. A bad heart, as well as a bad liver, will break out at the lips; and, if the discourse be poisonous, the venom will spread itself into the life and conversation: for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;* and *evil* words *corrupt good manners.* Sinful thoughts form themselves into words, and words will consolidate themselves into actions; and then sin is perfected, and hath attained its full growth: and if you would know what the next degree or step is that sin takes, the Apostle St. James tells you, Jam. i. 15; *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is* perfected, *bringeth forth death.* You can no more set bounds to your corruptions, than to the raging sea; nor than you can say to it, Hitherto shall thy proud waves go, and no further.

It were folly, when you have set fire to a train of powder, to expect it should stop any where short of the utmost of it: so, truly, when the thoughts are set on fire of hell, this will inflame the tongue, and that will inflame the life; and, unless God's infinite mercy prevent, this burning will stop no where short of everlasting burning.

Ask but your own experiences this. Have you not often found it so? Hath not the Devil drilled you on from Little Sins to Great Sins; and, from these, to far greater abominations? Believe it, there is a bottomless deceit in every sin; and this is the desperate issue of it, that, if once you come to account any sin small, you will soon reckon the greatest sin to be no more.

We commonly reckon the greatness of sin, by the abruptness of our advance to it. Possibly, it would seem a horrid thing, at the first rising of a temptation in our hearts, if we should presently perpetrate the utmost of it into act: therefore, the method of sin is more smooth and deceitful: it counts a sinful thought a little transgression, and sinful discourse to have but a little more guilt in it than a sinful thought, and sinful actions to have but a little more guilt in them than sinful words: a great sin but in a little degree exceeds a less; and so, comparing sin with sin, and not with the Law, we at length come, by invisible advances, to look upon the greatest impieties in the world to be but Little Sins, and so to commit them. If Satan prevails with us to go with him one step out of our way, we are in danger to stop no where, till we come to the height of all profaneness: he will make us take a second, and a third, and so to travel on to destruction; for each of these is but one step: the last step of sin is but one step, as well as the first; and, if the Devil prevail with us to take one step, why should he not prevail with us to take the last step as well as the first step, seeing it is but one? Your second sin no more exceeds your first, than your first doth your duty; and so of the rest.

We should not, therefore, account any sin small; but look upon them as the spawn of all the vilest abominations. And, as you would abhor death and hell, so abhor the least sin; because it hath a plot upon us, in subserviency to greater sins, that, without infinite mercy, will certainly bring to and terminate in death and hell.

vi. Consider, that THOSE SINS, THAT WE COMMONLY CALL THE LEAST, ARE INDEED THE GREATEST AND VILEST PROVOCATIONS.

Some sins are sins of greater infamy and scandal: other sins are sins of greater guilt and sinfulness; rude and blustering sins. Those sins, that are of greater infamy, are such as make him, that commits them, a scandalous person: and these are commonly reputed

great and crying sins by the world: if a man be a swearer, or a drunkard, licentious, or an adulterer, or a murderer; these sins make a man a scorn and a reproach to all that pretend to civility, But there are other sins, that are inward and spiritual sins; that are indeed more sinful, though less scandalous: such as unbelief, hypocrisy, hardness of heart, slighting and rejecting of Christ, resisting the Holy Ghost, and the like.

Now herein lies the great mistake of the world, in estimating of sin. At the naming of the former, we are ready to tremble: and so, indeed, we ought; and, not only so, but we ought to shun and avoid those, that are guilty of them, as monsters of men. But we have no such abhorrency against the latter: if the life be free from gross enormities, we look upon unbelief and impenitency but as small and trivial sins.

Now those sins, that we thus slight, are incomparably the greatest and the vilest sins. Murder, adultery, blasphemy, and the rest of those crying impieties, could not damn the soul, were it not for unbelief and impenitency. It is not the swearer, or the drunkard, that perishes; but it is the unbeliever: *He, that believeth not, is condemned already:* John iii. 18. And, so, hating of God, and a secret scorning and despising of holiness and the ways of God; these are sins, that do not defile and pollute the outward man; and many, doubtless, are guilty of them, that are of a fair and civil life and conversation: and, yet, these are sins, that may outvie the most horrid sins, for the hottest and lowest place in hell.

We see then what small heed is to be given to the judgment of the world concerning Small Sins. Those, that the world counts Little Sins, may be great and heinous in the sight of God; for God judgeth not as man judgeth: he is a spirit; and, therefore, spiritual sins and provocations, such as inordinancy in the thoughts, desires, and affections, are sins, possibly, that are more heinous in God's sight, than more carnal and gross sins are.

vii. Consider this: DAMNATION FOR LITTLE SINS WILL BE MOST AGGRAVATED AND MOST INTOLERABLE DAMNATION.

Oh, will it not be a most cutting consideration to the soul in hell, when it shall think, "Here I lie for ever in unquenchable flames, for the gratifying of myself in that, which I called Little Sins! Fool that ever I was, that I should account any sin little, that would bring to this place of torment! There is another of my fellow-wretched sinners, between whom and me there was as much difference as there was between me and a true saint: he profane and daringly wicked, I honest and civil; and yet, for allowing myself

in those sins to which the world encouraged me and called Little Sins, the same hell, that holds him, shall hold me for ever. Oh, the dreadful severity of God! Oh, wretched folly and madness of mine! Oh, insufferable torments and anguish!"

Believe it, thus will those, that are damned for Small and Little Sins, reflect upon their former lives. Such will be their dismal reflections; and such will be yours also: expect no other, if, being warned of the great evil that there is in Little Sins, you will yet persist in them without repentance.

And thus I have done with the Doctrinal part of the Text.

IV. I now come to make some APPLICATION of it.

i. And the First Use shall be by way of corollary. If so be that Little Sins have in them so much danger and guilt as hath been demonstrated to you, WHAT SHALL WE THEN THINK OF GREAT AND NOTORIOUS IMPIETIES? If sands will sink a man so deep into the lake of fire and brimstone, how deep then will their hell be, that are plunged into it with talents of lead bound upon their souls?

Whilst I have been setting forth the aggravations of the great evil that there is in Little Sins, possibly some profane spirit or other may thus argue: "If Little Sins be so dangerous and damning, then, since it is utterly impossible to keep ourselves free from all sins whatever, what need I scruple the greatest sin more than the least? I am stated down under a necessity of sinning; and I am told, that the rate, that every sin will stand me in, is eternal death: the least is not less, and the greatest is no more. It is but ridiculous folly, for a malefactor nicely to shun the dirt, and pick out the cleaner path, when he is going to execution: and so it is but a folly, for me to go the straiter and severer way to hell. And, therefore, since there is no difference between sins in the end, but all alike lead down to the same destruction, I will put no difference between them in my practice."

But, let such presumptuous sinners know,

1. That, *as all men's sins are not equal here, so neither shall all men's torments be equal hereafter.*

Some shall be beaten with fewer, others with more stripes. Some shall be chastised with whips, others with scorpions. The eternal furnace shall be heated seven times hotter for some, than for others. And for whom is the greater wrath prepared, but for the greatest sinners? In the blackest and hottest place in hell, is chained the great Devil, that Arch Rebel against God; and, after him, are ranked whole clusters of damned spirits; each, according to his several degrees, both of sin and torment. He, that suffers the least,

suffers no less than a hell; but, yet, he is in a condition to be envied by those, whose daring and desperate wickedness have brought upon them far heavier and sorer vengeance. These shall have cause to envy the state of little sinners, even as they do envy the state of glorified saints in heaven. Do not therefore conclude, that, because *the wages of* the least *sin is death*, therefore the wages of the greatest sin is no more, nor no worse: for, though, in a natural death, there is no being dead a little; yet, in the spiritual and eternal death, there are degrees. As the civil man was a saint here on earth, in comparison of the lewd and debauched sinner; so shall he be happy hereafter, in comparison of his torments. Let such, therefore, seriously consider, how sad and infinitely wretched their condition must needs be, since no less than damnation itself shall be judged a happiness, compared with what they shall suffer, and what wrath they shall lie under to eternity.

2. Consider, *In the commission of great sins, you do not avoid the commission of less sins: but only add to the guilt of them; and to that damnation, that will follow upon them.*

It is true, if a mere civil man, whose highest attainments are but some commendable external virtues; if he could change the guilt of all the Little Sins that he hath committed in his whole life, for the single guilt of some great and heinous sin, (though I pretend not to know the size or quantity of wrath that every sin deserves) yet possibly his eternal punishment might be hereby somewhat diminished. But this is the misery of great and presumptuous sinners, that they stand guilty of as many Little Sins as they do, that perish under the guilt of no other but Little Sins. Where do you see a person that is given up to vile abominations, but he lives also in a constant course and practice of Lesser Sins? The drunkard, the unclean person, and the rest of them, are they not always sinful in their thoughts, frothy and vain in their discourses? And is it nothing to you, that you incur damnation by Little Sins, unless you can advance your own destruction? unless you can promote yourselves to be next of all in torments to the Devil himself, by your greater provocations and impieties?

As you see in rivers, the natural course of them tends to the sea; but the tide, joining with them, makes the current run the swifter and the more forcibly: so is it with sin. Little sins are the natural stream of a man's life; that do of themselves tend hell-ward, and are of themselves enough to carry the soul down silently and calmly to destruction: but, when greater and grosser sins join with them, they make a violent tide, that hurries the soul away with a more

swift and rampant motion down to hell, than Little Sins would or could do of themselves. Therefore, when you hear how much evil there is in Little Sins, presume not to think there is nothing more in Great Sins. Yes, certainly: God is more provoked by them: your own consciences are more wounded by them: hell is more inflamed by them: and your own souls are more widened and capacitated by these Great Sins to receive fuller and larger vials of God's wrath, than they would be by the commission of Lesser Sins only.

We may take an estimate, in what proportion God's dealings with sinners will be, when he comes to punish them; by observing how he deals with them, when he comes to convince and humble them. The sober sinner feels no such pangs and throes, usually in the new birth; but God deals with him in a more mitigated and gentle manner: but when, at any time, he humbles a notorious blustering sinner, usually his method is, even to break his bones and scorch up his marrow; and, that he may save him from a hell hereafter, he creates a very hell in his conscience here. Now, as it is usually thus in conviction, so is it always thus in condemnation: of which convictions are but, as it were, the type and resemblance. When God comes to execute his wrath and vengeance upon sinners for their sins, his hand shall be very heavy and sore upon civilized sinners: oh, but the bold, daring, presumptuous sinner, him he will press down, and break in pieces with all his might. He, that suffers the least, shall yet lie under intolerable wrath; but where, then, unless in the flaming depth of the bottom of hell, will the infamous and profane sinner appear?

ii. Another use we may make of this doctrine is this. Is there so great evil and danger in Little Sins? then HERE BEHOLD A WOEFUL SHIPWRECK OF ALL THE HOPES AND OF ALL THE CONFIDENCES OF FORMALISTS AND SELF-JUSTICIARIES, that hope to appear before God, upon the account of their own innocency and harmlessness.

Hence learn, that a quiet, civil, honest life, free from gross and scandalous impieties, is no good plea or title for heaven.

Yet, truly, this is that alone, that the generality, especially of the ignorant, rely upon. Their lives are harmless, their dealings upright: none can justly challenge them, that they have done them any wrong: were they presently to appear before God's judgment-seat, they know nothing by themselves, that deserves eternal death: therefore, if God save any persons in the world, sure they are in the number of them.

But is it so, indeed? What! do you know nothing by yourselves? Had you never so much as a thought in you, that stept

awry? Did you never lodge a thought in you, that had in it the least vanity, impertinency, or frivolousness? Have you never uttered a word, that did so much as lisp against the Holy Law of God? Will you dare to tell God you never yet did an action, that innocency itself would be ashamed to own? Have your lives, in every part, been as strict and holy, as the Law of God commands them to be? If not, it is in vain to plead, for heaven, that your conversations have been honest, civil, and harmless: or that you have been religious, and maintained a constant course of holy duties and good works.

I would not here be mistaken by any, as if I were preaching against morality, or condemning civility and common honesty. No, by no means: they are excellent things, and the practice of them very commendable; and I heartily wish there were more of them to be found in the lives of those, that call themselves Christians. But, if this be all you can say for yourselves, believe it, the guilt but of one of your least sins will outweigh all these; and you, and all this your righteousness, must sink down together into hell. If this be all men have to plead for happiness, a civil, fair, and honest conversation: this may be; and yet men may indulge themselves in Little Sins, which will most certainly ruin and destroy them.

iii. If there be so great evil and danger in Little Sins, hence learn WHAT ABSOLUTE NEED WE STAND IN OF CHRIST: NOT ONLY THOSE AMONG US, WHOSE LIVES ARE OPENLY GROSS AND SCANDALOUS; BUT EVEN THOSE, WHO ARE MOST CIRCUMSPECT AND MOST CAREFUL IN THEIR WALKINGS.

Though you do not wallow and roll yourselves in the common filth and pollutions of the world; yet is it not possible, but that our garments should be sometimes spotted. An absolute and perfect state is rather to be wished for, than enjoyed, in this life. The utmost, that we can attain to here, is, not to commit Great Sins, nor to allow ourselves in Little Sins when through daily infirmity we do commit them.

Now these Little Sins, that the best of God's servants daily and hourly slip into, cannot be pardoned without the blood of a great and mighty Saviour. It is the same precious blood of Jesus Christ, that satisfied divine justice, for the incest of Lot, for the drunkenness of Noah, for the adultery and murder of David, and for the perjury of Peter, that must satisfy it also for thy vain thoughts, and for thy foolish and idle words, if ever thou art saved: for *without blood,* there *is no remission:* Heb. ix. 22, and, without remission, there is no salvation: Acts xxvi. 18. The same blood, that is a

propitiation and atonement for the greatest sins of the saints now in heaven, many whereof possibly have been as great as ever were committed on earth; the same blood of atonement must take from thee the guilt of thy vain thoughts and of thy idle words, or thou must for ever perish under them.

iv. If there be so great evil and danger in Little Sins, hence see, then, WHAT CAUSE WE HAVE TO BEMOAN AND HUMBLE OURSELVES BEFORE GOD, WITH TEARS IN OUR EYES AND SORROW IN OUR HEARTS, EVEN FOR OUR LITTLE SINS.

We should never approach before the Throne of Grace in Prayer, but, before the close thereof, we should, in confession, mourn over and beg strength against those, that the world calls, and we account, Small Sins.

Indeed, it is impossible to confess them all, particularly. Who can reckon up the vain thoughts and idle words of one day, without a whole day's time to recount them? for, indeed, we do little else in the day. And who, then, can reckon up the vain thoughts and idle words, that he is guilty of in his whole life, without living over his whole life to recount them?

When we have, therefore, confessed the more observable failings of every day, we ought to wrap up the rest in a general, but yet in a serious and sorrowful acknowledgment. Thus you find David did: Psalm li. where you have him confessing his two foul sins of adultery and murder. It is true, one would think he should have been so intent upon the begging of pardon for those sins, as that he could not spare a petition to ask pardon for any other sins: but, yet, though these were his Great Sins, yet he knew himself guilty of other transgressions besides, though of a less nature; and, therefore, he sums up all together, and heartily begs pardon for them in the heap: v. 9; *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.* And so, truly, we ought, in our daily prayers to God, after particular confession of those sins that do more nearly touch and grate upon our consciences, to bind up the rest in one general petition; and so present them to God for pardon, in some such like manner as this: "Lord, my own conscience condemns me; and thou art greater than my conscience, and knowest all things: I have observed much sin and guilt by myself this day; and thou, who searchest the heart and triest the reins, knowest far more by me than I do by myself: but, whatever I know by myself, or whatever thou knowest by me, Lord, do thou freely pardon and forgive it all unto me."

Only, here take heed, that, when you thus make your confessions

of your Small Sins in general, you do not also make them overtly, slightly, and superficially; which is the common fault of those, that confess sin by the heap. As many Little Sins of an ordinary infirmity, do equal the guilt of one great sin; so, truly, when we thus every day confess many of them together, we ought to be deeply affected with true godly sorrow; and as earnestly pray for the pardon of them, and as importunately beg power and strength against them, with the same tears, groans, and holy shame, as if that day we had committed some more gross and heinous sin.

When, therefore, in your prayers, you come to this request, "Lord, pardon me the sins and failings of this day," think with yourself, "Now I ought to be as fervent, as affectionate and penitent, as if I were confessing drunkenness or murder; for, possibly, the Little Sins and failings that I have committed this day, if they were all of them put together, the guilt of them may amount to be as great as one of those gross sins." Now, upon such a general confession and humiliation as this is, God issues out a pardon, in course, for our common and ordinary infirmities; and, by one act of oblivion, blots out many acts of provocation.

There are Two Considerations, that may be very useful to us, in order to the humbling of ourselves before God for Little Sins.

1. Consider, *These Little Sins are those sins, whereby we continually, without intermission, offend against God, and provoke him against our own souls.*

Still, either the matter of our actions is contrary to the holy will and Law of God; or the manner, in which we perform them. If the substance of our actions be not evil, yet the circumstances are: there is not a word in prayer, not a thought in meditation, but hath the guilt of some sin cleaving to it. And, if it be so with us in our holy performances, how do you think then it is with us in our common and ordinary conversation? And should it not deeply humble us, to consider, that there is not one hour, no nor one moment of our lives, free from sin? that our pulses beat too slow to keep an account of our sins by? Our thoughts are continually in motion, without intermission or cessation; and yet, *every* one of the imaginations *of the thoughts of* our hearts is *only evil*, and that *continually:* Gen. vi. 5. Certainly, did we seriously consider what it is we say, when we confess to God that our whole lives are nothing but one continued course of sin, those moments, every one of which brings fresh guilt upon us, would not slide away so pleasantly with us as they do: but, because our sins seem small to us, we regard them not; and so our time wastes, and our guilt increases, till eter-

nity puts a period and full end to those sins, to which we could never put any stop or intermission.

2. Consider *what a corrupt and depraved nature these Little Sins do flow from.*

When, at any time, we are sensible of a vain and sinful thought rising up in our hearts, we should trace it along to the fountain of it; even original corruption, from whence it bubbles up. If we would but do so, we should see great cause to be deeply humbled for that fruitful seed-plot of all manner of sins, that is in our hearts. Many thousands of lusts lie crawling and knotting together there, that never yet saw the light. The damned in hell have not worse natures in them, than we have. There is no sin, how horrid so ever, that they committed on earth, or can be supposed to commit now in hell, but we also should run into it, did not God's powerful restraints withhold us. Now do Little Sins proceed from such a corrupt and cursed fountain? and have we not then great cause to be humbled before the Lord for them; and to say, "Lord, here is sin, a Little Sin it is, but yet it proceeds from a heart that hath in it the spawn of all the greatest and vilest sins that ever were or can be committed: and, that it is but a vain thought, and not blasphemy, murder, or adultery, or any of the greatest and most crying sins that ever were committed in the world, is to be acknowledged and attributed only to the powerful restraint of thy free grace; for the same corrupt fountain, that sends forth this vain thought and that idle word, would have sent forth blasphemy, adultery, atheism, or any of the vilest abominations; but it is thy free grace only, that hath restrained us?"

v. If there be so great evil and danger in Little Sins, this then should teach us, NOT TO MAKE LIGHT OF ANY SIN.

Load every sin with its due weight: give every sin its proper aggravations; and then, certainly, you will see no reason to account any of them to be small or little.

To help you in this, take briefly these directions.

1. *Pray earnestly for a wise and an understanding heart, and for a soft and tender conscience.*

Some sins so counterfeit a harmless appearance, and look so innocently, that a man had need of much spiritual wisdom, to know how to distinguish between good and evil; and to put a difference between those things, that differ as much as heaven and hell do. Now this ariseth from that great blindness and ignorance that is in men's minds: whereby they cannot discern that great evil and mischief, that lurks under Small Sins; but are apt to account every

thing, that is not scandalous and grossly wicked, to be but an indifferent matter. And, as their minds are thus blinded, so their hearts are hardened; that what they see and know to be sinful, yet they will dare to venture upon. Whence is it else, that the generality of the world live in the commission of those that they call Little Sins, but because their hearts are hardened and their consciences seared; that those sins, that are great enough to damn them, yet are not great enough to trouble them? A tender conscience is like the apple of a man's eye: the least dust, that gets into it, afflicts it. There is no surer and better way to know whether our consciences begin to grow dead and stupid, than to observe what impressions Small Sins make upon them: if we are not very careful to avoid all appearance of evil, and to shun whatsoever looks like sin; if we are not as much troubled at the vanity of our thoughts and words, at the rising up of sinful motions and desires in us, as we have been formerly; we may then conclude that our hearts are hardened and our consciences are stupifying; for a tender conscience will no more allow of Small than of Great Sins.

2. *Labour always to keep alive upon your hearts awful and reverent thoughts of God, his omnipresence and omniscience;* that there is no sin so small, but he knows it; though but a sin in our thoughts, yet every thought of our hearts is altogether known unto him.

Call to remembrance his infinite purity and holiness, whereby he hates every Little Sin, even with an infinite hatred, as well as the greatest. Think of his powers, whereby he can, and of his truth, justice, and severity, whereby he will punish every Little Sin, with no less than eternal destruction. And, whilst you thus think of God, indulge yourselves in Little Sins, if you can. The Psalmist gives this very direction: Ps. iv. 4; *Stand in awe, and sin not;* that is, of the infinite, glorious majesty of God. Have awful thoughts and reverential apprehensions of God abiding upon your hearts, and that will keep you from sinning: stand in awe, and sin not. To look upon sin through the attributes of God, is, to look upon it through a magnifying glass; and, thus, you may best see its ugly deformed nature: this is the best way to represent the infinite guilt, that is in it; and that contrariety, that it bears to the holy nature of God. And, while you thus see sin, comparing it with God, even the least sin must appear heinous. And, when you are tempted to any sin, while you thus think, you may repel a temptation as Joseph did his mistress, *How* shall *I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Gen. xxxix. 9. The world, indeed, counts it but a Little Sin; but, looking upon it and comparing it with the holiness and purity of

God, we must cry out, How shall we commit this sin, though accounted little by others, and so provoke a great and holy God?

3. *Get a more thorough acquaintance with the spiritual sense and meaning of the Law.*

This was the cause, why the Pharisee did so slight the commission of Small Sins; because he kept himself to the literal sense of the Law: and so, because there he was commanded not to kill, not to commit adultery, and the like, he thought, if he did abstain from the outward act of those sins, he observed the Law; yea, and observed it sufficiently. But the spiritual meaning of the Law, forbids not only the outward act, but it forbids whatever tends to the outward act; inward thoughts, motions, desires, complacencies in sin, that are presented to the fancy, with whatever tends to or belongs unto sin: the spiritual sense of the Law forbids all these. Grow more in acquaintance with the spiritual sense and meaning of the Law, and then you will think small sins, such as the sins of the thoughts, of the desires, and of the fancy, and the like, to be no less forbidden by the Law, than murder or adultery, and other heinous sins; the Law having as strictly forbidden the one, as the other.

4. *Beware you compare not sins among themselves.*

The Apostle speaks of some, 2 Cor. x. 12, who, *measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves*, were *not wise*. Truly, it is as great a folly for us to measure sin by sin, or to compare one sin with another. For, as, when we measure ourselves with others, our Pride is apt to suggest to us, that such and such are inconsiderable persons in comparison of us: so, when we measure one sin by another, Corruption is apt to suggest to us, such a sin is a small and inconsiderable sin in comparison of another sin; and therefore I may venture upon it.

Certainly, if we observe it, two sad events usually follow upon our comparing sins among themselves.

Either, (1) We make little sins less than they are. Or, if we are beaten off from such false opinions, by being shown how great an evil there is in them, then,

(2) We make it as good to commit the greatest sin as the least.

These two sad events always happen, if we compare one sin with another. Compare not, therefore, sin with itself; but compare sin with thy duty. Compare the Least Sin with the holiness of that God, against whom thou committest it: and this is the way, whereby you may be brought to account no sin to be small or little.

III.

OF ABSTAINING FROM THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL.

Abstain from all appearance of evil. 1 THESS. v. 22.

MY last subject, as you may remember, was to show you the great Evil and Danger that there is in Little Sins.

Now, because the words at present read unto you, seem to have a near cognation to the truth then delivered: it being a most certain gradation, that he, that would avoid Great Sins, must avoid Little Sins; and he, that would avoid both great and little, must consequently shun also the very Appearances of Sin; I have, therefore, pitched upon this brief exhortation of the Apostle, that thereby we might, so far as is possible, be led up unto that exact purity and holiness, the endeavour after which is absolutely necessary to all those, whose desire and care it is to obtain eternal salvation.

In sundry verses before the Text, the Apostle laid down several sententious commands: Let *none render evil for evil: Rejoice evermore: Pray without ceasing: In every thing give thanks: Quench not the Spirit: Prove all things: Abstain from all appearance of evil.* Being now towards the end and close of his Epistle, and not willing to omit the mentioning of duties so necessary for their practice, he doth, as it were, pour them out in weighty, though short exhortations.

The connexion betwixt most of them is very dark, or else none at all: only, betwixt the text and the two immediately foregoing verses, it may seem more plain and natural.

In v. 20, He exhorts them not to despise prophesying; *Despise not prophesyings;* that is, the preaching even of the common and ordinary preachers and teachers, whose office it was to expound the Scriptures to them, and to declare the mind and the will of God out of the Scripture. Did the Apostle mean only that extraordinary and miraculous prophesying that he spoke of, 1 Cor. xiv. when, by an immediate impulse and influence of the Holy Ghost, either they foretold things future, or else spake in divers languages; he needed not then to have so solicitously forewarned them not to despise him, since so great a miracle as this Prophesying would sufficiently have vindicated itself from all contempt. The meaning therefore is this: Whatever gifts or graces you may have attained unto, though you may know your duties as well, and though you may practise your duties better than they; yet, despise not their teaching: but what they propound to you as the will of God, that attend unto, with all reverence and submission.

But, yet, says the Apostle, I would not have you therefore pull out your own eyes, because of the gifts of your teachers and leaders.

No: do not mancipate and captivate yourselves to whatever they shall dictate unto you; but *prove all things:* as it is in v. 21; *Search the Scriptures:* examine whether the things delivered to you be true or not. If, upon trial, you find them so; then, *Hold fast the form of sound words:* in v. 21, *Hold fast that which is good.* But if, upon impartial search, you understand and find that the doctrine delivered to you be unsound, then abstain from it. Though the doctrine delivered to you be true, yet, if their expressions be deceitful or such as may lead into error, if their notions be dangerous, if their expressions be bold and adventurous, though you must not reject the doctrine, yet abstain from that appearance of evil that is in them.

Hence, from the connexion, we may observe, That, in the delivering and receiving of doctrines, we should carefully abstain, not only from what is unsound and dangerous, but also from what is unsafe and venturous.

And, truly, had this caution of our Apostle been duly regarded; had not teachers luxuriant tongues, and hearers itching ears, loathing old truths, unless they appear set off in new dresses; our times had not been so fruitful in those monsters of opinions, that make it disputable, whether our knowledge or our errors were more.

It is a true saying among the ancients, That heresies spread from words, if not falsely, yet unduly and improperly spoken. The foolish, rash, and daring expressions, that have dropped from men sound in the truth, being received by those, that have not been able to put a difference, betwixt what is proper and what is figurative, what is doctrinal and what is rhetorical, have been the occasion of leading many aside into most dangerous and destructive tenets. Certainly, Christian Religion is a thing more severe and punctual, than to be rhetoricated upon, and flourished with oratory, that may, through hearers' mistakes, as much pervert the judgment, as it may please and tickle the fancy. There is great weight in words; for, by them, the understanding is steered, either into the knowledge of truth, or else into the embracing of error: and, therefore, we ought to use such expressions, as are least liable to any misapprehensions or misinterpretations.

It is enough, to speak that, which may possibly be fetched off, with truth, by a distinction; but, if we did but consult the ignorance of some and the malice of others, we would see reason enough to speak, if possible, so as that the ignorant might not be able to mistake us, nor the malicious be able to misconstrue us. As, for instance, to affirm that we are mystically united unto Christ, and

thereby become one with him, this is a most high and most undoubted truth; but, to say that we are Goded and Christed, as some have gone about to express this ineffable mystery in sweet and sugar words, this hath been the occasion of that Familistical Blasphemy and Nonsense, that hath invaded so many parts of the nation.

We must observe and consider also, that the sense and meaning of many expressions vary and alter from the time in which they were used. Those very words, that were well used some ages since in matters of divinity and religion, cannot now be used without *appearance of evil* in them; because, now, their signification is quite different from what it was then. I will instance but in one; and that is concerning the meriting of good works. It is true, the Ancient Fathers of the Church did hold there was merit in good works: but, yet, it is clear also by their writings, that the word Merit did not then signify, as now it doth: then, it signified only rewardableness; and, when any maintained that works merited, the common sense of them all was no more than this, That their works should be rewarded by God: and this is all, that they did affirm. But, now, the word Merit signifies desert in works, arising from the equality that is in them, to the reward propounded and promised to them; and, therefore, now to assert, that works have merit in them, is very unsafe and erroneous; which whilst the Papists do, they do indeed still retain the expressions of the Ancient Fathers, but the sense is gone; that is, they still hold fast the feather, when the bird is flown away.

We should, therefore, beware, in our discourses of the doubtful things of religion, that we venture not upon those phrases and expressions, that either border upon error, or that may likely lead into error. And, truly, the generality of Christians have need of much spiritual prudence and sobriety; that, while they desire and are taken with luscious and sweet words and expressions, they do not withal suck in poisonous and destructive errors.

This shall suffice to be observed from the connexion of the words foregoing, *Prove all things;* that is, all doctrines that are delivered to you: *Hold fast that, which is good*; *but abstain from* that, which hath but the *appearance of evil* in it: though the doctrines themselves, that are delivered, be, in some sense, sound and savoury; yet, if they be delivered in a sense and expression that may be wrested aside to undue and erroneous interpretations, abstain as far as is possible from such expressions.

I shall now consider the words under a more general latitude, as they relate unto Practice as well as to Doctrine.

And, so, here the Apostle lays it down as an unerring rule, That we must not embrace any thing, that hath but an appearance and no more, whether that appearance be of good or of evil: we must not hold fast any thing, that hath but the appearance of good only; and we must abstain from every thing, that hath but only the *appearance of evil.*

And, therefore, when licentious persons are reproved for the vanity, looseness, strangeness, and immodesty of their garbs and attire (that possibly more disguiseth than adorneth them) and other symptoms of a vain and frothy mind, they think presently to cover their nakedness with such fig-leaves as these: "What evil is there in these things? Can you prove them sinful? If you can, we will forbear the use of them: if you cannot, forbear you to reprove them." What if they could not be proved to be in themselves sinful; yet have they not the show, the face, and the *appearance of evil?* So judge all serious and sober Christians; and yourselves also, possibly, may so judge sometimes: therefore, dispute not the lawfulness or the unlawfulness of these things in themselves: if they have but the show and the likeness of evil in them, they are to be abstained from absolutely.

And, truly, considering that great carelessness and want of circumspection, that is even among professors themselves, who, if they can but keep themselves from that which is intrinsically in itself sinful, make no scruple of venturing upon the borders and edges of sin, I thought it therefore very necessary to open this phrase and exhortation of the Apostle unto you: which I shall endeavour to do, in the prosecution of this plain Proposition:

THAT A TRULY CONSCIENTIOUS CHRISTIAN OUGHT CAREFULLY TO AVOID, NOT ONLY THE COMMISSION, BUT ALSO THE VERY APPEARANCE OF EVIL. *Abstain from all appearance of Evil.*

This point is indeed full of niceness and difficulty: and, truly, when the most is said of it that can be, we must stand very much to the judgment of Christian Prudence and Christian Charity, for our chief resolution in it: of Christian Prudence, to know when an action hath the *appearance of evil* in it, and when not; and of Christian Charity, to shun whatever may scandalize others, though we do not defile ourselves. It is a point hardly limited to such bounds, but in some places there will be a failing.

Yet, that I may afford you some light in the knowledge of a duty so necessary as this is, I shall,

I. Lay down some DISTINCTIONS concerning the *appearance of evil;* and from them,

II. Lay down some POSITIONS, whereby it may be cleared how how far forth we stand obliged to avoid even the very *appearance of evil.*

III. Some DEMONSTRATIONS, whereby it may appear how necessary and requisite this duty of avoiding of the *appearance of evil* is.

I. I will begin with some DISTINCTIONS of the *appearance of evil.* And,

i. An *appearance of evil* may be either altogether GROUNDLESS; or, else, it may be built upon GOOD GROUNDS, and upon PROBABLE PRESUMPTIONS.

ii. That, which hath only a groundless *appearance of evil,* may so appear either to OURSELVES, or to the consciences of OTHERS.

iii. We must also consider, whether this action, that appears to be evil, be a NECESSARY action and duty in itself; or only FREE and INDIFFERENT, and left to our own free choice.

II. Now, from these Distinctions, I shall lay down several POSITIONS, concerning the limitation of our obligation to *abstain from all appearance of evil.*

i. WE OUGHT, IN NO CASE WHATSOEVER, TO DO THAT, WHICH HATH AN APPEARANCE OF EVIL IN IT, IF THAT APPEARANCE BE GROUNDED UPON A PROBABLE PRESUMPTION.

1. Now, to *explain* this, an action then carries in it a probable presumption of being evil, either,

(1) When, ordinarily, it proves an occasion of evil.

Such actions there be, that are in themselves possibly lawful: but yet they prove occasions of sin to most, that venture upon them; because, thereby, many times they are brought within the verge and compass of a temptation, which temptation overcomes them. It was not simply unlawful in itself, for Achan to look upon the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold: but yet, thereby the Devil got an advantage upon him, and made that an occasion to stir up his covetousness; and, therefore, because it was probably to be feared and presumed that this might be an occasion of sin to him, therefore he ought to have refrained even his very eyes from looking upon them.

(2) When an action is ordinarily done to an evil end, then it hath in it the *appearance of evil,* grounded upon a probable presumption.

Thus, to enter silently into another man's house in the dead of the night, carries in it a presumption of theft: and to enter into the temples of idols at the time of idolatrous worship, carries in it a presumption of idolatry: and so our intimacy, familiarity, and

friendship with those that are wicked, is a grounded presumption that we are like them, and that we do as they do. And the reason of this is, because, when we do those actions that commonly tend to a bad and sinful end, it is an ill sign, that we intend the end itself to which those actions lead.

2. Now *from every such appearance of evil, we ought, in all cases, to abstain:* and that, for these Two following reasons.

(1) Because all such *appearances of evil* always prove scandals unto others.

A scandal is twofold; either the scandal of sin, or the scandal of sorrow. Now this venturing upon the presumed *appearance of evil,* proves a scandal in both respects: it proves a scandal of sin to the weak; and it proves a scandal of sorrow to the strong.

[1] It proves a scandal of sin to the weak.

Then are we said to give a scandal of sin, when we do any thing, that tends naturally to bring others into the commission of sin. But the very appearance of sin in us may lead others to the practice of sin: when a weak Christian sees us run into those things that are occasions of sin, he also thinks he may lawfully venture as far as we do; and, venturing, because possibly he is weaker than we are, he is ensnared and entrapped in those sins, to the occasions of which we led him by our example.

[2] It proves also a scandal of sorrow to strong Christians.

They see such probable signs and presumptions of sin in us, that they justly conclude, that certainly we are guilty of those sins; and, thereby, their hearts also are saddened and grieved.

And that is the First Reason, why we must forbear *all appearance of evil,* that is built upon strong presumptions that we have indeed committed the evil.

(2) Another reason is, because all such occasions of sin and such appearances of sin have guilt in them also; as being against the same Commandment, which that sin violates and tends unto.

For the same Commandment, that forbids the sin itself, forbids all occasions and all appearances of that sin. That Commandment, that forbids theft, forbids also whatever may induce, though but remotely, thereunto: and that Commandment, that forbids adultery, forbids also all remote occasions thereof. Hence it is, that Solomon gives the young man that scrupulous caution against a strange woman, in Prov. v. 8, *Come not nigh the door of her house.* To pass by the door of her house, is not, in itself, unlawful: but yet, when this may be justly feared to prove an occasion of sin; or when, by going near a house, it may be strongly presumed by others, that

we are guilty of any sin; then it must be carefully avoided and abstained from. So, again, when the wine looks red in the cup, Solomon bids us that we should not then look upon it. To look upon the wine in the cup, is not a thing that is unlawful: but because this may be an occasion of intemperance, and drunkenness, or the like; therefore, we must abstain from this very *appearance* and occasion *of evil.*

So, then, in the *appearance of evil,* there is not only the evil of scandal given to others, but there is also the evil of guilt in itself. And, therefore, let us all examine ourselves, what at any time hath proved a snare to us, and what hath been an occasion of sinning. Have you not often said it, and resolved it, that you would venture but so far and no farther; and, though you do approach near to sin, yet you will keep yourselves within your duty? and have you not found, that, when you have thus ventured upon the occasions of sin, you have stopped no where short of the commission of those sins? This is to put yourselves out of God's way, and to put yourselves from under his protection: for God doth not usually keep them from the commission of sin, who do not keep themselves from the occasions and appearances of sin.

And, so much, for the First Position.

ii. But if, in case an action appears evil to a man's self, though this apprehension of it be wholly groundless, then I shall lay down this Second Position.

THOUGH AN ACTION BE IN ITSELF INDIFFERENT; YET IF IT APPEAR EVIL AND SINFUL TO US, WE OUGHT NOT, IN ANY CASE, WHILE THAT MIS-PERSUASION CONTINUES, TO VENTURE UPON THE DOING OF IT.

No, though by doing of it, we might avoid the greatest evil. Yea, we are rather, if Providence bring us to that sad choice, to lose our very lives, than to do any thing against the persuasion of our own consciences, though in itself it be not evil or sinful.

The reason of this is clear: because we are rather to choose the greatest affliction and suffering, than to commit the least sin.

But to go contrary to the dictates and persuasions of our own consciences, this is sin: Rom. xiv. 23; *Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin:* that is, whatever a man doth, if he be not fully persuaded and convinced of the lawfulness thereof in his own conscience, that is a sin to him that ventures upon it while he is unsatisfied, though the thing in itself may be lawful. And *he, that doubteth,* says the Apostle, in the same verse, *is damned if he eat:* that is, though there be no real difference betwixt one kind of meat and another, but all are

alike lawful; yet, if a scrupulous conscience put a difference betwixt them where there is none, and if it account it unlawful to eat of some sorts of meat, if, after this, a man ventures to eat them, hereby he sins, says the Apostle, and incurs damnation, by doing that against his conscience, that yet, were his conscience otherwise informed, were lawful for him to do. And so, in Rom. xiv. 20; *For meat destroy not the work of God. All things are pure; but it is evil for* him, who *eateth with offence.*

These and many other places clearly prove, that what is done against a man's own conscience is sinful to that man. Conscience hath the privilege of a negative vote in the soul: nothing can lawfully be done by us, but what hath the full consent and approbation of our consciences; and, though every thing we think is lawful doth not thereupon presently become lawful to us, yet what we think is unlawful doth thereupon become unlawful for us to do, and we ought, whatever the case be, wholly to abstain from the doing of it.

iii. IF THE ACTION, THAT WE JUDGE EVIL AND UNLAWFUL TO US, BE OUR DUTY, AND SO BECOMES NECESSARY TO US, THEN ARE WE UNDER A MOST SAD ENTANGLEMENT: WE SIN, IF WE DO IT; AND WE SIN ALSO, UNLESS WE DO IT.

This is the unhappiness of many, that, through a misinformed conscience, they verily believe they ought to abstain from that which is indeed their duty; and to do that, wherein they sin indeed if they do it.

And so Christ speaks of some, that thought verily they did *God* good *service,* when they persecuted and murdered his saints, in John xvi. 2. If they did not what they thought was good service to God, they sinned on that hand; and, yet, if they killed the saints, which they judged to be good service, they sinned on that hand also: so that they were entangled on both hands.

So is it in our days also. We have seen and known many, that thought it their duty to abstain from ordinances; yea, who thought it their duty to perform no duty at all to God. Now if these men abstain from them, they sin, in doing that, which is contrary to what God commands: if they use them, they sin too, because they, do that, which is contrary to what conscience commands.

So that it is, indeed, the greatest plague and punishment in the world, for God to give men up to the power of an erroneous and misguided conscience.

Now it appears, that whatever a man doth against his conscience, be the action indifferent, or be the action his duty and so necessary; yet he sins. Which is evident in Two things.

1. Because *there is no man, but thinks his conscience is rightly informed.*

No man thinks his conscience erroneous: every one judges himself to be in the right, and to be rightly informed. Now, if he thus judges, and acts contrarily, he sins, because he intends to sin: and, therefore, by crossing an erroneous conscience, though possibly he doth well in the action; yet he sins in intention, since he doth that, that he himself thinks doth cross the rule by which he should walk.

2. Another reason is this: because, *by acting contrary to conscience, though misinformed and erroneous, we do contemn the authority and will of God; and, therefore, it is sin.*

We are all to guide our consciences by the word, that is, God's written will; and we are all to guide our lives by our consciences. No man thinks his conscience to be erroneous; but thinks it to be according to the will of God. Now, if we do not act accordingly, we sin as much as if indeed it were informed according to the will of God. Conscience is God's deputy and vicegerent in the soul; and what conscience saith, we think it is God that commands, whether it be or not: and, to act contrary to it, is virtually and implicitly to disobey God; because we think what conscience speaks, God speaks. And, therefore, it is very sad to fall under the entanglements of an erroneous conscience; for then we are under a sad necessity of sinning on both hands: if we act according to it, we sin; and if we act not according to it, we sin. We should, therefore, above all things, heartily beg and desire of God, who is the Lord of Conscience, that he would rightly inform our consciences in those things that are our duties; that so, by guiding our lives by our consciences, we may guide them also according to his will.

These Three Positions respect those things that appear evil to ourselves.

iv. But there are other things, that have a good appearance unto us, that yet may have an evil appearance to others. They may scruple, and be offended at what we do, though, for our own parts, we ourselves are sufficiently satisfied in the lawfulness of it.

And, indeed, our times, what through different customs and interests, have brought men's consciences also to such different sizes, that it is utterly impossible, but some will condemn what others allow as lawful; yea, what others, not only allow, but stiffly maintain to be necessary and our duty.

How then should we behave ourselves in this case? What rules must we walk by, so as to keep consciences void of offence, not only to God, but, as far as is possible towards men also? In this, if in

any thing that belongs to Christianity, there lies a great deal of difficulty, to state the case aright, or aright to practise it.

And the difficulty is increased from these two considerations, which I shall lay down as general premises to the following discourse.

First, if we give no power to the scrupulous judgments of weak and tender consciences to oblige us to duty to abstain from what appears evil to them, then we shall sin evidently against the law of charity; and against many apostolical injunctions and commands, that we should have respect to their opinions and censures: especially in Rom. xiv., and in 1 Cor. chap. viii., and x., almost throughout. Indeed there is scarcely any one thing belonging to Christianity, that hath more rules and prescripts prescribed by the Apostle to us, than this of abstaining from offending the weak consciences of others.

Secondly. If we make other men's consciences the rule of ours, and if we lay down this for a maxim, that we ought to do nothing that appears evil to another; this

First. Would be utterly impossible: since men are of such contrary persuasions, that, if the doing of an action appear evil to one, the omission thereof appears as evil to another; so that, unless we can at once both do it and not do it, some will unavoidably take offence at it, and be scandalized at us.

Secondly. This would abridge, yea utterly destroy, all Christian Liberty in things indifferent: because, if nothing should be lawful that another scruples, then almost every thing would become sinful, since almost every thing is scrupled by some or other. In vain, therefore, is it to reckon it as our privilege, that we are freed from the old Ceremonial Law, and that heavy yoke of ordinances that none were able to bear, if yet Christian Religion brings our consciences under the most imperious laws of men's humours, censures, and opinions: it were far easier to observe all the Levitical Law from one end of it to the other, than to be bound to those worldly rudiments; as the Apostle calls them in Col. ii. 21; *Touch not, taste not, handle not:* wear not, speak not; if such a person be offended at it, and count it unlawful.

From the consideration of these Two Particulars, I shall lay down this Fourth Position, concerning abstinence from the *appearance of evil,* in respect of others.

IF THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL BE TO OTHERS, AND NOT TO OURSELVES, THEN, IN SOME CASES, WE ARE BOUND, IN DUTY AND CONSCIENCE, TO ABSTAIN FROM IT, AND IN OTHERS NOT.

Whatever hath the show or *appearance of evil* in it, it must either

be commanded, and so it is necessary; or, else, it is left indifferent and arbitrary. And, accordingly, we may take these following Rules.

1. *If so be those things, that appear evil only to others, either are in themselves, or at least appear to us to be, commanded, and so necessary, we are bound not to regard, yea we are bound to despise and scorn, the scruples of all the world.*

If they will be offended at us for doing of that, which is our duty, let them be offended. We may, in this case, use the same plea, that the Apostles did: Acts iv. 19, *Whether it be right* before the Lord, to obey men, rather than God, *judge ye.* To perform a duty, can be but a scandal to men at the most; and those also, usually, of the profaner sort: but to omit a duty for fear of scandalizing men, is a scandal and an offence even unto God himself. It is most preposterous charity, to run upon sin in ourselves, only to prevent scandal in others. Though all the world censure holiness and strictness of life, to be only a sour and rigid humour, and an affectation of singularity; yet must we not, upon any pretence of gratifying their humour or winning upon them, remit the least part of that severity, that the Law of God and our consciences require from us.

But suppose, as too often it happens, that this strictness and holy severity prove to be an occasion of sin unto others accidentally, what must we do in that case? What is it, that makes so many hate religion and scoff at the professors thereof, but only that their lives are too morose and reserved? Duties are too frequent and tedious: so that some laugh and mock; others storm and rage; and all are frighted from the embracing of that profession, that requires so much rigour and severity.

Be it so: yet we must not abate any thing of our duty, nor sin ourselves, to keep others from sinning. Is it your duty to pray, or are you called to any other duty? though you are assured that all that hear you will scoff at you, yet you ought not therefore, for fear of it, to forbear that duty, or to lessen your fervency and affection in it. Here, indeed, is required much spiritual prudence and discretion, to discern the seasons of our duty for several circumstances: and, among those offences that wicked men may take, it may make that cease from being a duty that at other times is our duty: and, therefore, the Wise Man in Prov. xxvi. 4, bids us, not to *answer a fool according to his folly;* and yet, in the next verse, he bids us, *answer a fool according to his folly:* two commands quite contrary, in two verses following one another. Now this is to note to us, that,

according to several circumstances and several opportunities, it may be our duty to abstain at one time from that, which at another time it is our duty to do: it is our duty sometimes, not to reprove a fool, but to answer him *according to his folly;* and, according to divers circumstances, at another time, it is our duty to reprove him, and not to answer him *according to his folly.* But yet, notwithstanding, that which is our duty in its particular season, and which we are convinced to be so, we ought to perform, though all the world be offended at it: yea, and if it were possible that it should prove an occasion of sin unto all the world; for, as we must not do evil out of hope that it may prove an occasion of good, so neither must we forbear the doing of good that evil may not occasionally ensue thereupon. Our Saviour Jesus Christ was, as it was prophesied of him, to be *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence:* almost all were scandalized at him; some at his doctrine, as a despiser of the Law of Moses; others at his conversation, as being *a glutton, a wine bibber,* and *a friend of publicans and sinners:* but yet, for all these outcries, he alters nothing either in his teaching or his living; but, whilst they are clamouring against him and speaking evil of him, he still goes about doing good. And, truly, those, that will be the disciples and followers of Christ, though the way in which they are to worship and serve God be generally decried, and every where spoken against and carped at as needless peevishness; yet, if it be a known duty, they must not, they ought not to put themselves out of the way of their obedience, to put others out of their groundless offences.

Only, let me add a necessary caution to this particular also: for we cannot be too exact in stating this case of giving offence to others: and that is this. If that appear a duty to us, that hath an *appearance of evil* in it to the generality of the most sober and serious Christians, (let us suppose that) though this should not presently sway our consciences, yet it should engage us to make a strict search and inquiry, whether it be our duty or not: if it is that, which is contrary to the opinion and practice of holy and pious Christians, it ought to have this authority with us, to put us to a stand; and to make us to examine, whether that, which we account a duty, be indeed a duty or not. As, for instance, some among us at this day are persuaded that they ought to worship God one way, and some another; and what appears a duty to one, hath the appearance of evil in it to another. Follow neither of these; because it is their judgment and practice: but yet, if thy persuasion be contrary to the persuasion of the most pious and most sober Chris-

tians, this ought so far to prevail, as to make men suspect lest they mistake; and to put them upon a diligent inquiry, and an impartial search into their grounds and arguments: but, after all, still follow that, which you are convinced in your own conscience is your duty, how evil soever it may appear to others, either one way or the other.

And that is the first particular: If those things appear evil to others, that are our duty, or necessary, or that appear so to us, we ought not to regard the censures and opinions of others concerning them.

2. *If so be those things, that are in themselves indifferent, and appear to us so to be, have yet an evil appearance unto others, if they be offended and scandalized at them, then the rule of Christian charity obligeth us to abstain from them.*

I call those things indifferent, that are neither in themselves forbidden, nor yet commanded; but only permitted, and left to the arbitrary government of every private Christian's prudence and discretion. As, for instance: under the Levitical Law, some kinds of meat were unlawful; as in Lev. xi., and some kinds of garments were unlawful to be worn; as in Lev. xix. 19. But now, under the Gospel, since the abolishing of those *carnal ordinances*, as the Apostle calls them, Heb. ix. 10, both all sorts of meat become lawful, whilst we use them within the bounds of temperance and moderation; and all sorts of garments may be lawfully worn, while we use them within the bounds of modesty and decency. These things are left free, for us to use them or not to use them, without sin, according to our own conveniency and discretion. These things I call indifferent things.

And yet, such is the strictness of Christian Religion, that these indifferent, lawful things are not to be used at random, neither. It is a certain truth, though it may seem a paradox, that we never sin in any thing more, than in doing that, which is in itself lawful. In these things we usually offend, either by using them immoderately; or with a neglect, yea with a contempt of those consciences, that are weak. The use of our Christian Liberty is not uncontrollable; but God hath subjected it to the consciences of others: so that it is utterly unlawful for us to do that, which is in itself lawful, if it give offence unto others.

How this ought to be limited, I shall show you by and by.

In the mean time, see it clearly proved out of 1 Cor. x. from v. 25, to the end: where the Apostle decides this question, Whether it were lawful to eat meat that was offered to idols. For the understanding

of this, you must know, that it was a custom among the heathens to offer cattle in sacrifice to their Idol-Gods; part whereof they did eat in their religious feasts in the temple, selling the remainder in the common market. Now the question was not, whether it was unlawful to join with the heathens in eating of their sacrifices in the temple, before their idols; for this were to join with them in their idolatrous worship: but there were some more scrupulous Christians among them, that judged it unlawful to eat of those sacrifices, when sold in the shambles or common market. The Apostle determines this matter to be altogether indifferent, in v. 25. *Whatsoever is sold in the shambles,* whether offered to idols or not, *that eat.* But yet, if any weak Christian even so scruple to eat that which is offered to idols, after it is sold in the shambles, and if he be offended at others for eating of it, the Apostle then gives this rule, that the strong ought not to eat for the sake of the weak: though the thing be indifferent, and might be done; yet the strong ought not to eat for the sake of the weak: v. 28; *If any man say, This* was *offered in sacrifice unto idols,* though sold in the shambles, yet *eat not, for his sake that shewed* you *it.* Now what the Apostle here speaks of meat offered in sacrifice to idols, holds true proportionably in apparel, in recreations, and the like indifferent lawful things; all of which become sin to you, if they become offences and scandals unto others. The reason of this is evident: because when men rashly do what they think is lawful, without regarding the scruples of others, hereby they do, as the Apostle speaks, in Rom. xiv. 13; *put a stumbling-block* and *an occasion* of falling *in* their *brother's way:* that is, they bring him into the commission of a sin, and this is against the law of charity. For, says the Apostle, in v. 15; *If thy brother be grieved* at *thy meat, thou walkest not charitably.*

Now, in doing that which appears evil to others, though it be lawful in itself, yet it may be an occasion of sin to them Two ways.

(1) It may alienate their hearts from the ways of God.

When, notwithstanding all the profession thou makest of holiness and of strictness of life and conversation, yet they see that what they account loose and sinful is generally practised and maintained; whether it be sinful or not, yet seeing you generally practise that which is accounted evil, this alienates their hearts from the ways of God and from the profession of religion.

(2) It brings sin also, because it may encourage them to do the same things, that you do also.

Now that may be sin to them, that is to you lawful; because, as I told you, whatever is done contrary to the dictates and persuasions of a man's own conscience, that is sin to him. Now many weak

Christians may be induced to act contrary to conscience, only acting according to the examples of stronger Christians, that are better informed, and that have more light to direct them; and so, by their unlimited doing what they think is lawful, they bring a great deal of guilt upon the consciences of others, that are weak; and that scruple the things they see others do; and yet, because they see others do them, will themselves venture to do them also, though they scruple it. It is not enough, therefore, that you yourselves are satisfied in your own consciences, that what you do is lawful; but you must weigh and consider how it will suit with the consciences of other men also: else, what you think is lawful, may be a sin both unto you and unto them; to them, because they are brought to sin by your example; and to you, because you brought them to sin by doing that which was to you lawful.

But here some may say, "This is to bring us under a most intolerable yoke of servitude, if we must be bound to observe every ignorant humorous man's conscience, that will scruple every thing. It is in vain to tell us, that some things are lawful and allowed to us, if yet we must do nothing to give offence in that which appears evil to others; for what one thing is there in the world, that doth not appear evil to some or other? This is to bring us into an intolerable bondage and slavery."

To this I answer: There are several cases, wherein, though there be an *appearance of evil* unto others in some things, yet we may lawfully do them: as,

First. We are not obliged to abstain from things indifferent, that may have in them an *appearance of evil* to others, unless we have some ground to conjecture, that they take offence and are scandalized at them.

We are not bound to ask every one that we meet with, whether they scruple such and such a thing that we must do: this were endless and ridiculous. We are not obliged to abstain, if there be only a remote possibility of scandal, unless there be also some great probability of it: nor are we bound to divine whether or not it be not possible, that such an action of ours may be offensive to some or other; but if there be no present probability to conjecture that such a thing may be offensive, we may then lawfully do whatever is lawful unto us. And, therefore,

First. If, by comparing the circumstances of an action together, we cannot probably guess that any should be offended at it, it is their weakness, and not our sins, if they be offended at it. Indeed, whenever we converse with others, it becomes our Christian pru-

dence and charity, to weigh such circumstances exactly; to consider the action that we do, though lawful, yet whether or not it be common or unusual; to consider the persons with whom we are, whether weak or strong, whether scrupulous or resolved Christians: for that, which may be lawful in some of these circumstances, may be unlawful in others of them. An action may be lawful, if it be common, though it be done before a weak and scrupulous Christian; and it may be lawful, though uncommon, if it be done before a strong and a resolved Christian: but, if it be unusual, and if it be done before a scrupulous and a weak Christian, it may seem to have in it a great probability of giving offence and being a scandal to them; and, therefore, we must forbear such uncommon, unusual actions before weak Christians, in which there may be any probable guess that they will take offence, and be scandalized at them; but if, upon examining these and the like circumstances, we can find no such probability of giving offence, we may then make use of our Christian Liberty in them.

Secondly. After we have weighed these circumstances and can find no probability of scandal in them, if others, with whom we are or who are liable to take exception, do not discover their exceptions, we are not bound to abstain from any thing that is indifferently lawful. We have a hint of this from the Apostle: 1 Cor. x. 28. *If any* one *say unto you, This* was *offered....unto idols, eat not;* if he say to you. But, if they take offence and will not make it known, the offence. as it rests in their own bosom, so shall it lie on their own heads, and we shall be guiltless.

And that is the first limitation. We are not bound to abstain from things lawful in themselves, though they carry in them an *appearance of evil* towards others, if there be no probable grounds to conjecture that they will be offended at them.

Secondly. We must consider whether or not the action that we do, which another takes offence at, be as indifferent to us, as it is indifferent in respect of God; that is, whether it be of great conveniency, or of great importance and concernment to us: if it be not of such convenience and importance, then the Rule of Charity obligeth us to abstain from it.

There are those things, that are indifferent in respect of God that yet may not be indifferent in respect of us; because they may be of great concernment unto us. If it be so, then we ought to observe this method: so long as we may without any notable inconveniency, we must abstain from these things; endeavouring, in the mean time, to satisfy their doubts, and inform their consciences of the lawful-

ness of that wherewith they are offended. This rule the Apostle lays down for us, Rom. xv. 2. *Let every one seek to please his neighbour for his good to edification.* We ought to abstain from those things, that are indifferent in respect of God and yet of importance unto us, from the exceptions of others, so long as we have no notable inconveniency accruing to ourselves thereby, endeavouring also to inform them of the lawfulness of them.

"But what if they continue scrupulous, and contemn information; resolving not to be satisfied with any reasons, that we can produce: what must we do in this case?"

Truly, it ceaseth now from being any longer an offence to a weak brother; and becomes a groundless offence taken up by a peevish, froward, and malicious person: and, certainly, in this case, no man is bound to abstain from that which is lawful, though he may give offence to such an one; especially, if it be of moment and concernment to him. As, for instance: if any be unsatisfied of the lawfulness of another man's calling and profession; as, at this day, the Socinians are unsatisfied of the lawfulness of warlike and military employments; if they will not be satisfied when sufficient reasons are alledged to justify it, we are not bound in this case to quit our callings; for they are matters of concernment to us: but we are bound rather to neglect their censures; as proceeding from malice and spite.

"But what if others still continue unsatisfied, not out of pride and malice, but out of weakness; as being insufficient to receive that information from us that we give them, and to conceive of the depth of our reasons and arguments for the justifying of such and such actions: what shall we do in that case?"

To this I answer, in the third place: We are not bound to abstain from what they are offended at, unless they produce some probable grounds and reasons for their offences. It is not enough to oblige our consciences, that they tell us they imagine such a thing to be evil, unless they show some grounds for their imagination. Nor is it here required, that the grounds they produce should be demonstrative; but it is enough if they be probable grounds: though they amount not to prove the things that appear evil to them, to be in themselves evil; yet, if they prove that these things carry in them a probable presumption of evil, this is sufficient to oblige us to abstain from them.

Hereupon it was, that the Apostle forbad the Corinthians to eat meat offered unto idols. If any took offence at that meat, others were not to eat thereof in their presence and company; and that,

because their offence had some probable show of reason to judge that they thought they had too much communion with idols, because they did eat of those things that were sacrificed to them.

And, upon this ground, the Apostle himself resolves, in 1 Cor. viii. 13, that if meat made his brother to offend, he would eat no flesh while the world stood: that is, as I take it, no flesh offered to idols; for that is the subject of which he had been treating all along in that chapter. Though it was lawful, in itself considered; yet, because the weak had probable grounds and reasons to show why flesh offered to idols might not be eaten, therefore he would abstain from it whilst the world stood.

And so, in like manner, if any except against what we do, and bring this reason for it, that it is too like the custom of wicked men, that none do thus and thus but the generality of the looser and profaner sort: this is such a ground, that, though the thing in itself be not sinful, yet we ought hereupon to abstain from it; being a probable ground of evil, though the thing in itself be not evil.

But, if there be no such probable reasons produced as carry in them a show and appearance, that probably that is evil which we do; then we are not bound to abstain, merely because such a man says or thinks such an action is evil. As, for instance: if any take exception against preaching in a Pulpit and by an Hour-Glass, as things unlawful, as of late many have; truly, unless they produce some grounds to prove these things to be unlawful, their cavils are not to be hearkened to nor regarded. And so, in any other things, that are indifferent to be used.

3. In the last place, take this limitation also: *We are not bound to abstain from those things that appear evil to others, though they are in themselves lawful; unless in those places, and at those times, where there is danger of giving offence.* At other times, and in other places, we may lawfully do what is lawful. When there are any present, that are weak and scrupulous, and apt to be scandalized at us, then we must have respect unto their weak consciences; but, at other times, we are left to the free and full use of our Christian Liberty.*

* The author does not appear to have completed this discourse according to the plan proposed in the beginning, as he has omitted the Third General Head. EDITOR.

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